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OUR VILLAGE:
SKETCHES
OF
RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENERY.

BY
MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

FOURTH SERIES.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, & CO.
AVE-MARIA-LANE.
1830.

LONDON :
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE.

PREFACE.

THE continued encouragement afforded by the Public to her successive series of Village Sketches, has induced the Writer to bring forward a Fourth Volume, on nearly the same plan, which she earnestly hopes may prove as fortunate as its predecessors.

A few of the stories were composed purposely for children ; but as people do not, now-a-days, write down to those little folks, and as the Authoress has herself, in common with her wisers and betters, a strong propensity to dip into children's books when they happen to fall in her way, she by no means thought it necessary to omit them.

Three Mile Cross,

April 23, 1830.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

TO MISS W.

Feb. 20, 1830.

- No, my dearest Mary, the severe domestic calamity which we have experienced will not, as you expect, and as many of our other friends seem to anticipate, drive us from our favourite village. On the contrary, the cottage home, in which she, used to such very different accommodation, closed her peaceful and blameless life, the country church in which her remains lie buried, and the kind neighbours by whom she was so universally respected and beloved, are now doubly endeared to us by their connexion with her whom we have lost. There is no running away from a great grief. Happy are they to whom, as in our case, it comes softened and sanctified by the recollection of the highest and most amiable virtues clothed in manners the most feminine

and the most ladylike. To them memory will be the best comforter, for such memories are rare. No, dearest Mary, we certainly shall not think of removing on this account.

But, besides that our affliction is too real and too recent * to dwell upon, I have no right to sadden you with my sadness. I will rather try to escape from it myself and to answer, as best I may, your kind questions on other subjects, particularly those respecting the place in which you take so kind a concern, and such of its inhabitants as have had the good fortune to interest you.

Our Village, (many thanks for your polite enquiry) continues to stand pretty much where it did, and has undergone as little change in the last two years as any hamlet of its inches in the county. Just now it is in an awful state of dirt and dinginess, the white nuisance of snow having subsided into the brown nuisance of mud in the roads, whilst the slippery treachery of ice is converted into the less dangerous but more deplorable misery of sloppiness on the foot way. They talk of the snow as having been so many feet deep. I wonder whether any one has undertaken to sound the depth of the dirt. Over pattens and over boots gives but a faint

* My beloved and excellent mother died on the morning of New Year's day.

and modified notion of the discomforts of a country walk during the present fine thaw, to say nothing of the heavy clinging dripping annoyance, called draggled tails.

We feel these evils the more since they are of a kind from which our light dry gravelly soil generally protects us. And even now we have the comfort of knowing, not so much that we are better off than our neighbours, but that they are worse off than ourselves—a comfort, the value of which nobody who has not had cause to feel it can duly appreciate. Their superior calamity, arises not merely from the snow and the thaw, grievances which we endured in common, but from the Loddon on one side of us, and the Kennet and Thames on the other, having embraced so fair an opportunity of playing their usual pranks and overflowed the country round, as if governed by the malicious water sprite, (I forget the gentleman's name) who popped his head out of a well and flooded the heroine's castle and territory in Undine. So far as all the meadows and half the cellars North, South, East, and West, of our village being under water may afford us comfort, we possess it in perfection. Another consolation, although rather prospective than present, may be found in the fact, that to judge from certain islands of gravel rising at intervals through the mud, our road is about to undergo the operation of mending—that excruciating operation which horses, drivers, and passengers hate so thoroughly in its

progress, and like so well in its consequences. In our village proper, other changes have we none.

On the outskirts of the parish, indeed, improvement hath not been idle. The fine place on the top of the hill, the Park as it is called, hath undergone no less a transmogrification than that of Grecian to Gothic, one of those changes which people hold themselves privileged to criticise; and they are seldom slack to exercise that privilege, because to discover faults looks wise, but which in richness and variety generally contrives to please the eye, and to be quite as pretty as if all the world were agreed to call it so. I have no doubt, judging from the praise and the blame, but I shall like the building. By the way the Park, our only point of change, hath undergone in its own person alteration enough to serve the whole parish. Besides the Gothic casing of the mansion, the grounds have been improved; plantations of twenty years' growth transplanted; trees double that age made to change sides, according to the bold practice of now-a-days; and the hill on which the house stands pared off to let in the water, by a body of excavators (navigators our villagers by an ingenious slip-slopism were pleased to call them) imported from afar. Altogether the Park is a new place.

Amongst our inhabitants we have the usual portion of mutability. Besides those graver changes of which the Parish Register keeps accompt, there has been con-

siderable movement and fluctuation in our little colony. Many of the old settlers have migrated and some new ones have arrived. The most notable of these changes is the departure of the female blacksmith and her noisy progeny, who are now dispersed over half the forges in the county, to the probable improvement of their din and the certain abatement of ours. Not that we are particularly quiet now—that would be too much to say, but the village clamour has changed its character. Before there was a sort of contest in loudness between the geese, and the boys; now the geese have it hollow. Nobody thinks of complaining of the children, or even of hearing them, whilst their rivals are railed at from morning to night, and have even become of note enough to be threatened with an indictment.

The present occupier of the forge is John Ford, the civil intelligent husband of our pretty neighbour, the lass of the shoe shop. They are fairly settled in the blacksmith's territories with their little girl, who, being the only child of an only child, and having two grandfathers, two grandmothers, and one great grandfather, is of course cried up for the most wonderful wonder of wonders that ever trod the earth; and really without being her grandmother or her great grandmother I cannot help admiring the little damsel myself, it's such a delicate fairy, so merry and so full of glee.

In addition to our new blacksmith, we have a new shoemaker, a new collar-maker, a new carpenter, and a new baker, although the last mentioned personage is non-resident, and only perambulates the village in his cart, to say nothing of the newest of all our novelties, a new schoolmaster, elected yesterday. Each of these functionaries is of some note in his particular calling, especially the baker, who is eminent for his loaves which are crusty, and his temper which is not; but the acquisition which interests me most, is the new occupant of the wheelwright's pretty apartments, a lady whom you must know some day or other, and who is to me a delightful companion and a most valuable friend. She must never go away, for what would our village do without her!

Now to the rustic lovers after whom you enquired with so kind an interest: Jem and Mabel are married; Joel and Harriet are not; their affair stands much as it did, a regular engagement with intermitting fits of flirtation on the lady's side and of jealousy on the part of the gentleman. Some day or other I suppose they will marry; but really they are such a handsome couple and their little quarrels are so amusing that it will be quite a pity to put an end to the courtship. The third and last pair of turtle doves, Daniel Tubb and Sally North, remain also unwedded in spite of the indications on Valentine's day, which even the experience of the

lame Clerk deemed infallible. Somehow or other the affair went off. Poor Stephen Long the other hero of that adventure—How like you it is to take pity on one whom nobody else thinks worth caring for!—Poor Master Stephen, our small London apprentice met during that very visit with another misfortune in the same line, and as the poor little person seems rather to have taken your fancy I may as well tell you the story now.

Before his adventure with Miss Sally North was fairly over, that is to say before that relentless damsel had set him free from her basket*, Master Stephen Long began to discover, as rejected lovers sometimes do, that he would not have been accepted for the world; not that he bore any ill will to the young person, but that he had no taste for giantesses, and a particular aversion for hoydens and tomboys and women who trespassed against the delicacy of their sex; and no sooner was he safely dismounted from the fair head on which he had remained perched in most ludicrous wrath, restrained from jumping down by a mingled fear of hurting Sally and hurting himself, and looking much like one of those non-descript animals rampant which so often serve as a crest in heraldry;—no sooner was he fairly on the ground than he communicated in very chosen terms to his obdurate mistress, his opinion of the escape which he had had in not marrying her, and

* Vide Vol. III. of Our Village, page 81.

bowed himself off. It is said that our rural coquet, for as little as she cared for her cockney lover, was somewhat piqued at this cool resignation; and that his portly and good-humoured rival, her chosen Valentine, had a good deal of huffing and brusquerie to endure on the occasion, Sally having followed the example of her betters, by revenging on the innocent object in her power the affronts offered her by the culprit who was not;—nay, so much did she take his defection to heart, that it was even whispered in the village, that a tender speech, or a copy of verses, or a new ribbon from Stephen, might have replaced their love affair in statu quo.

None such arrived. Stephen had done with her. “It had been a boyish choice,” as he said to himself, with all the importance of a young gentleman, who has just entered his nineteenth year, “a boyish mistake; his next choice should be wiser, wise and deliberate; he had plenty of time before him.” Accordingly he walked round the parish, and fell in love again, or thought he fell in love, before noon on the same day. Nothing so easy as catching a heart on the rebound; especially such a heart as Master Stephen’s, who, in spite of his being the very cleverest boy in Aberleigh School, and one of the cleverest ’prentices in Cheapside, a proser, a poet, an orator, and a critic, was between conceit and kind-heartedness and a spice of romance,

one of the simplest persons that ever existed. It was a good-natured mannikin too, and a generous; and would not have seemed so very ugly or so very small, or so ridiculously like the picture of the monkey that has seen the world in the older editions of Gay's Fables, but for the caricature of fashion exhibited in its dress, and the perking strutting air, the elevated chin, the tiptoe walk, and the vain endeavour to pass for tall, which pervaded the whole little person, producing exactly such a copy of the gait and mien of a full-grown man, as that ambitious bird a he bantam exhibits of the size and actions of the great cock of the farm-yard. A kind youth nevertheless was Stephen Long, a kind and well-disposed youth; dutiful to his grandmother who was very fond of him, and being nearly blind, approached nearer his own estimate of his personal graces than any body else; respectful to his father; affectionate to his brothers and sisters; and civil to the whole world. He made the tour of the village that very morning, and it was on a visit to his old acquaintance the mistress of the shop, that he had the good luck to lose over again the heart which would otherwise have hung so heavily on his hands.

Peggy Norman, his new lady-love, was a little serving maiden, living at Captain Selby's, a family of some gentility in Aberleigh, and had the neatness of dress, and the general gentillesse of appearance belonging almost

exclusively to the class of soubrettes. Pretty she could hardly be called ; and yet there was much attraction in her trim girlish figure, so light and round and youthful, her thick curling brown hair, the dazzling red and white of her brilliant complexion, as brightly contrasted as the colours in an apple-blossom, the broad smile disclosing a set of white even teeth, to say nothing of a very pretty dimple, and the whole expression of her bright blue eyes, whose arch glance when suddenly thrown up, formed an excellent accompaniment to the broad dimpled smile, and harmonized well with the naïveté and espièglerie of her voice and manner. It was the most agreeable manner that could be conceived, very gentle, very respectful, and very gay. Mrs. Selby, pleased with her young liquid voice, her pretty accent, her constant simplicity and occasional acuteness, and exceedingly amused by the new form in which her own opinions and remarks were sometimes returned to her by her docile attendant, had encouraged her light-hearted prattle, so that without any touch of presumption or pertness, Peggy felt the security of pleasing, proper to a spoilt child, joined to a constitutional desire to please which spoilt children are seldom lucky enough to possess. She was a perfect little rose-bud of fifteen, and all the more dangerous to Stephen Long because she was little, he having contracted a remarkable aversion to the entire race of giantesses.

The errand on which Peggy had been sent to the territories of Mrs. White, being of a nature to detain her a considerable time, she having been ordered to match unmatchable silk with unprocureable cotton, Stephen had ample opportunity for falling in love, and even for making love; and before the grand question was decided whether the yellow, the blue, or the brown balls, of which Mrs. White's stock was composed, made the nearest approach to her green pattern, a very promising flirtation had commenced, greatly promoted by the complaisant mistress of the shop, who invited both parties to drink tea with her on the succeeding evening.

They met accordingly, and the love-affair proceeded most prosperously. Stephen had the happiness to find in this new flame a degree of literary acquirement which stood in the most advantageous contrast to the positive duncicality of Sally North. Mrs. Selby being a literary lady, Peggy had heard the names of authors and the titles of books; she had even a personal acquaintance with the outside of periodical literature, knew the colours of magazines, the backs of reviews, and the shapes of newspapers; could tell at a glance the Edinburgh from the Quarterly, and the John Bull from the Literary Gazette; was familiar with the grim face on Blackwood, and knew at a touch the Old Monthly from the New. Stephen was in raptures. In

another respect too, they met on even terms. Peggy had recently accompanied her mistress to London, had spent a whole fortnight there, and was so charmed with the gaiety and hurly burly of that great noisy good-for-nothing pleasant place, always delightful to healthy and lively youth, that she could talk of nothing else, and had certainly brought back with her a slight feeling of contempt, (pity she was pleased to call it) for the less fortunate bumpkins who had never heard the sound of Bow Bell. True it is that in talking of London, Peggy and Stephen meant very different places,—Stephen spoke of his home, the city; Peggy of hers, the west-end;—and a few mistakes and cross-readings ensued, especially on Peggy's part, who took Oxford Street for Cheapside, and Westminster Abbey for St. Paul's. But all passed under the general denomination of *Town*.—"There is a river in *London*, and also, moreover, there is a river in *Westminster*, and there is salmons in both." And Peggy talked and listened and smiled; and Stephen went home and wrote a sonnet to "his mistress's eye-brow."

The next day (Sunday,) they met again after church, and took a walk together in the evening, in the course of which they discovered another subject common to both, that subject which those who like it at all find so delightful—the Theatre. Stephen, certainly the most literary of hosiers' apprentices, was especially enthu-

siastic on the drama, had twice appeared at a private theatre, and entertained a strong desire to embrace the stage as a profession as soon as he was out of his time. Now Peggy had herself been at three plays, and talked of them with some discretion; knew Comedy from Opera, and Tragedy from Farce. But it was not a talker that Stephen required on this theme; a listener was what he wanted; and no one ever acted audience whilst he rehearsed the story of his two appearances in Romeo and Richard the Third, better than the little blue-eyed girl who hung on his arm so admiringly as they walked round Aberleigh Green. Nothing, he said, could exceed the applause with which his debut in Romeo had been greeted by a large audience of city 'prentices, and shopwomen, troubled only by the astounding height of a bouncing Juliet, half as tall again as himself, who quite spoilt, as he observed, the proportions of the play. Again they made the tour of the Green, and Peggy had half promised to study the part of Juliet, when a difference arose out of this very subject which put an abrupt end to their courtship.

From his personal adventures Stephen wandered to a general critique on plays and actors, especially to a warm encomium on one great actor, who was as he said *his* model. Peggy (who had seen the tragedian in question in Othello) assented heartily to the panegyric,

adding " that it was a great pity so clever a man should be black *."

" Black!" ejaculated the astonished Stephen;
" Black!!"

" Yes," answered Peggy, " black; a blackamoor, a negro."

" Blackamoor!! Negro!!!" re-echoed Stephen, more and more astounded. " Mr. — black! Are you dreaming? He's as fair as you are. What do you mean? What can you mean?"

" What I say;" returned Peggy. " Did not I see him with my own eyes, and was not he as black as a chimney sweeper? and did not his wife and every body talk of his complexion all through the play? You need not stand there, Mr. Stephen, holding up your hands and eyes, and looking as if you thought me a fool. I am not such a dunce as Sally North. I have been to London, and been to the play, and what I have seen I believe, for all your strange looks. He's as black as my master's great greyhound,"—continued Peggy, who had gradually talked herself into such a passion, that her cheeks generally like a cabbage-rose

* This singular mistake did actually happen to a country girl of my acquaintance. I do not venture to put the actor's name,—although surely it was a compliment in its way, not unlike that which Partridge paid to Garrick.

were of the colour of a red cabbage—"as black as your hat."

Stephen on his part was for the first time in his life dumbfounded; first at the singular mixture of ignorance and simplicity implied in the assertion and the reasons brought to support it; secondly at the impudence of the little country damsel who did not know Westminster Abbey from St. Paul's, and yet ventured to impugn his authority on such a point. "Let me tell you—" he began, when a little recovered from his consternation, "Let me tell you child—."

"Child!" interrupted Peggy, touched on the very point of dignity; "child yourself! It is well known that I am sixteen all but eight months, and as for you, you'll look like a boy all the days of your life. You play Tragedy! Why you're hardly tall enough for Punch. Child indeed! And I almost sixteen! Never come near me again, Mr. Long, I have nothing to say to you—" and off marched Peggy; and poor Stephen twice rejected in three days would certainly have hanged himself in Sally North's scarlet garters, had he not had the lucky resource of tender poesy, that admirable vent-peg of disappointed love. He went back to Town, and wrote an elegy, and we have heard no more of him since.

So much for our villagers. With regard to my own small territory, it has lost one of its prime ornaments;

my beautiful greyhound Mayflower is dead. Old age and the cold weather were too much for her. Poor pretty May! She lies under a rose-tree in a place she liked well. And my garden, "that bright bit of color," as you call it, and which in the summer so well deserves the name; my garden is much like a small field newly harrowed, except that a grove of sticks seems to indicate the site of bulbs and perennials and other underground treasures. Matters are mending though. Two mild days have brought up a few green buds just peeping above the earth, and the borders begin to shew symptoms of floweriness. The snowdrop, the crocus, the hepatica, and the aconite are already in blossom (to think of being able to count the flowers in my garden!) and the Mezereon, and the *Pyrus Japonica* will be out to-morrow. Things are certainly mending. My green-house looks really spring-like, and the robin which has inhabited that warm shelter during the whole winter, making no further excursion than to the honey-suckle opposite and back again, has ventured to the great pear-tree, and has got a companion, the rogue! I should not wonder if he built him a nest, and only visited us when he wanted bread crumbs.

The greenhouse does really give token of spring. You do not know my green-house, dear Mary, but you must come and see it. You have promised; have you not? At all events you must come. It is the sim-

plest thing that ever was, and the prettiest—an excavation in a barn with glass in front looking on my nose-gay of a garden, and serving like Cowper's, the double purpose of a shelter for the geraniums in winter, and a summer parlour for ourselves. When they go out, we go in. Last year, which was generally so mild, a short sharp frost took us by surprise, and killed all my plants; but this severe winter we were prepared, and have saved them—and you must come to see them—and to see us—and then we shall like the greenhouse better still.

Ever yours,

&c. &c. &c.

LOST AND WON.

“NAY, but my dear Letty—”

“Don’t dear Letty me, Mr. Paul Holton! Have not the East-Woodhay Eleven beaten the Hazelby Eleven for the first time in the memory of man? and is it not entirely your fault? Answer me that, sir! Did not you insist on taking James White’s place, when he got that little knock on the leg with the ball last night, though James, poor fellow, maintained to the last that he could play better with one leg than you with two? Did not you insist on taking poor James’s place? and did you get a single notch in either innings? And did not you miss three catches—three fair catches—Mr. Paul Holton? Might not you twice have caught out John Brown, who, as all the world knows, hits up? And did not a ball from the edge of Tom Taylor’s bat come into your hands, absolutely into your hands, and did not you let her go? And did not Tom Taylor after that get forty-five runs in that same innings, and

thereby win the game? That a man should pretend to play at cricket, and not be able to hold the ball when he has her in his hands! Oh, if I had been there!"

"You!—Why Letty"—

"Don't Letty me, sir!—Don't talk to me!—I am going home!"

"With all my heart, Miss Letitia Dale!—I have the honour, madam, to wish you a good evening." And each turned away at a smart pace, and the one went westward and the other eastward-ho.

This unlover-like parting occurred on Hazelby Down one fine afternoon in the Whitsun-week, between a couple whom all Hazelby and Aberleigh to boot, had, for at least a month before, set down as lovers—Letty Dale, the pretty daughter of the jolly old tanner, and Paul Holton, a rich young yeoman, on a visit in the place. Letty's angry speech will sufficiently explain their mutual provocation, although, to enter fully into her feelings, one must be born in a cricketing parish, and sprung of a cricketing family, and be accustomed to rest that very uncertain and arbitrary standard, the point of honour, on beating our rivals and next neighbours in the annual match—for juxta-position is a great sharpener of rivalry, as Dr. Johnson knew, when, to please the inhabitants of Plymouth, he abused the good folks who lived at Dock; moreover, one must be also a quick, zealous, ardent, hot-headed, warm-hearted,

girl like Letty, a beauty and an heiress, quite unused to disappointment, and not a little in love, and then we shall not wonder, in the first place, that she should be unreasonably angry, or, in the next, that before she had walked half a mile her anger vanished, and was succeeded by tender relentings and earnest wishes for a full and perfect reconciliation. "He'll be sure to call to-morrow morning," thought Letty to herself: "He said he would, before this unlucky cricket-playing. He told me that he had something to say, something particular. I wonder what it can be!" thought poor Letty. "To be sure, he never has said any thing about liking me—but still—and then aunt Judith, and Fanny Wright, and all the neighbours say—However, I shall know to-morrow." And home she tripped to the pleasant house by the tan-yard, as happy as if the East-Wood-hay men had not beaten the men of Hazelby. "I shall not see him before to-morrow, though," repeated Letty to herself, and immediately repaired to her pretty flower-garden, the little gate of which opened on a path leading from the Down to the street—a path that, for obvious reasons, Paul was wont to prefer—and began tying up her carnations in the dusk of the evening, and watering her geraniums by the light of the moon, until it was so late that she was fain to return, disappointed, to the house, repeating to herself, "I shall certainly see him to-morrow."

Far different were the feelings of the chidden swain. Well-a-day for the age of chivalry ! the happy times of knights and paladins, when a lecture from a lady's rosy lip, or a buffet from her lily hand, would have been received as humbly and as thankfully as the Benedicite from a mitred abbot, or the accolade from a king's sword ! Alas for the days of chivalry ! They are gone, and I fear me for ever. For certain our present hero was not born to revive them.

Paul Holton was a well-looking and well-educated young farmer, just returned from the north, whither he had been sent for agricultural improvement, and now on the look-out for a farm and a wife, both of which he thought he had found at Hazelby, where he had come on the double errand of visiting some distant relations, and letting two or three small houses recently fallen into his possession. As owner of these houses, all situate in the town, he had claimed a right to join the Hazelby Eleven, mainly induced to avail himself of the privilege by the hope of winning favour in the eyes of the ungrateful fair one, whose animated character, as well as her sparkling beauty, had delighted his fancy, and apparently won his heart, until her rude attack on his play armed all the vanity of man against her attractions. Love is more intimately connected with self-love than people are willing to imagine ; and Paul Holton's had been thoroughly mortified. Besides,

if his fair mistress's character were somewhat too impetuous, his was greatly over-firm. So he said to himself—"The girl is a pretty girl, but far too much of a shrew for my taming. I am no Petruchio to master this Catherine. 'I come to wive it happily in Padua;' and let her father be as rich as he may, I'll none of her." And, mistaking anger for indifference—no uncommon delusion in a love-quarrel—off he set within the hour, thinking so very much of punishing the saucy beauty, that he entirely forgot the possibility of some of the pain's falling to his own share.

The first tidings that Letty heard the next morning were, that Mr. Paul Holton had departed over-night, having authorised his cousin to let his houses, and to decline the large farm, for which he was in treaty; the next intelligence informed her that he was settled in Sussex; and then his relation left Hazelby—and poor Letty heard no more. Poor Letty! Even in a common parting for a common journey, she who stays behind is the object of pity: how much more so when he who goes—goes never to return, and carries with him the fond affection, the treasured hopes, of a young unpractised heart,

"And gentle wishes long subdued—
Subdued and cherish'd long!"

Poor, poor Letty!

Three years passed away, and brought much of change to our country-maiden and to her fortunes. Her father, the jolly old tanner, a kind, frank, thoughtless man, as the cognomen would almost imply, one who did not think that there were such things as wickedness and ingratitude under the sun, became bound for a friend to a large amount; the friend proved a villain, and the jolly tanner was ruined. He and his daughter now lived in a small cottage near their former house; and at the point of time at which I have chosen to resume my story, the old man was endeavouring to persuade Letty, who had never attended a cricket-match since the one which she had so much cause to remember, to accompany him the next day (Whit-Tuesday) to see the Hazelby Eleven again encounter their ancient antagonists, the men of East-Woodhay.

"Pray come, Letty," said the fond father; "I can't go without you; I have no pleasure any where without my Letty; and I want to see this match, for Isaac Hunt can't play on account of the death of his mother, and they tell me that the East-Woodhay men have consented to our taking in another mate who practises the new Sussex bowling—I want to see that new-fangled mode. Do come, Letty!" And, with a smothered sigh at the mention of Sussex, Letty consented.

Now old John Dale was not quite ingenuous with

his pretty daughter. He did not tell her what he very well knew himself, that the bowler in question was no other than their sometime friend, Paul Holton, whom the business of letting his houses, or some other cause, not, perhaps, clearly defined even to himself, had brought to Hazelby on the eve of the match, and whose new method of bowling (in spite of his former mischances) the Hazelby Eleven were willing to try; the more so as they suspected, what, indeed, actually occurred, that the East-Woodhayites, who would have resisted the innovation of the Sussex system of delivering the ball in the hands of any one else, would have no objection to let Paul Holton, whose bad playing was a standing joke amongst them, do his best or his worst in any way.

Not a word of this did John Dale say to Letty; so that she was quite taken by surprise, when, having placed her father, now very infirm, in a comfortable chair, she sate down by his side on a little hillock of turf, and saw her recreant lover standing amongst a group of cricketers very near, and evidently gazing on her—just as he used to gaze three years before.

Perhaps Letty had never looked so pretty in her life as at that moment. She was simply drest, as became her fallen fortunes. Her complexion was still coloured, like the apple-blossom, with vivid red and white, but there was more of sensibility, more of the heart in its

quivering mutability, its alternation of paleness and blushes; the blue eyes were still as bright, but they were oftener cast down; the smile was still as splendid, but far more rare; the girlish gaiety was gone, but it was replaced by womanly sweetness;—sweetness and modesty formed now the chief expression of that lovely face, lovelier, far lovelier, than ever. So apparently thought Paul Holton, for he gazed and gazed with his whole soul in his eyes, in complete oblivion of cricket and cricketer, and the whole world. At last he recollected himself, blushed and bowed, and advanced a few steps, as if to address her; but timid and irresolute, he turned away without speaking, joined the party who had now assembled round the wickets, the umpires called “Play!” and the game began.

East-Woodhay gained the toss and went in, and all eyes were fixed on the Sussex bowler. The ball was placed in his hands; and instantly the wicket was down, and the striker out—no other than Tom Taylor, the boast of his parish, and the best batsman in the county. “Accident, mere accident!” of course, cried East-Woodhay; but another, and another followed: few could stand against the fatal bowling, and none could get notches.—A panic seized the whole side. And then, as losers will, they began to exclaim against the system, called it a toss, a throw, a trick; any thing but bowling, any thing but cricket; railed at it as de-

stroying the grace of the attitude, and the balance of the game; protested against being considered as beaten by such jugglery, and, finally, appealed to the umpires as to the fairness of the play. The umpires, men of conscience, and old cricketers, hummed and hawed, and see-sawed; quoted contending precedents and jostling authorities; looked grave and wise, whilst even their little sticks of office seemed vibrating in puzzled importance. Never were judges more sorely perplexed. At last they did as the sages of the bench often do in such cases—reserved the point of law, and desired them to “play out the play,” Accordingly the match was resumed; only twenty-seven notches being gained by the East-Woodhayians in their first innings, and they entirely from the balls of the old Hazelby bowler, James White.

During the quarter of an hour's pause which the laws allow, the victorious man of Sussex went up to John Dale, who had watched him with a strange mixture of feeling, delighted to hear the stumps rattle, and to see opponent after opponent throw down his bat and walk off, and yet much annoyed at the new method by which the object was achieved. “We should not have called this cricket in my day,” said he, “and yet it knocks down the wickets gloriously, too.” Letty, on her part, had watched the game with unmingled interest and admiration: “He knew how much I liked

to see a good cricketer," thought she; yet still, when that identical good cricketer approached, she was seized with such a fit of shyness—call it modesty—that she left her seat and joined a group of young women at some distance.

Paul looked earnestly after her, but remained standing by her father, inquiring with affectionate interest after his health, and talking over the game and the bowling. At length he said, "I hope that I have not driven away Miss Letitia."

"Call her Letty, Mr. Holton," interrupted the old man; "plain Letty. We are poor folks now, and have no right to any other title than our own proper names, old John Dale and his daughter Letty. A good daughter she has been to me," continued the fond father; "for when debts and losses took all that we had—for we paid to the uttermost farthing, Mr. Paul Holton, we owe no man a shilling!—when all my earnings and savings were gone, and the house over our head—the house I was born in, the house she was born in—I loved it the better for that!—taken away from us, then she gave up the few hundreds she was entitled to in right of her blessed mother to purchase an annuity for the old man, whose trust in a villain had brought her to want."

"God bless her!" interrupted Paul Holton.

"Ay, and God will bless her," returned the old man

solemnly—" God will bless the dutiful child, who despoiled herself of all to support her old father !"

" Blessings on her dear generous heart !" again ejaculated Paul ; " and I was away and knew nothing of this !"

" I knew nothing of it myself until the deed was completed," rejoined John Dale. " She was just of age, and the annuity was purchased and the money paid before she told me ; and a cruel kindness it was to strip herself for my sake ; it almost broke my heart when I heard the story. But even that was nothing," continued the good tanner, warming with his subject, " compared with her conduct since. If you could but see how she keeps the house, and how she waits upon me ; her handiness, her cheerfulness, and all her pretty ways and contrivances to make me forget old times and old places. Poor thing ! she must miss her neat parlour and the flower-garden she was so fond of, as much as I do my tan-yard and the great hall ; but she never seems to think of them, and never has spoken a hasty word since our misfortunes, for all you know, poor thing ! she used to be a little quick-tempered !"

" And I knew nothing of this !" repeated Paul Holton, as, two or three of their best wickets being down, the Hazelby players summoned him to go in. " I knew nothing of all this !"

Again all eyes were fixed on the Sussex cricketer,

and at first he seemed likely to verify the predictions and confirm the hopes of the most malicious of his adversaries, by batting as badly as he had bowled well. He had not caught sight of the ball; his hits were weak, his defence insecure, and his mates began to tremble and his opponents to crow. Every hit seemed likely to be the last; he missed a leg ball of Ned Smith's; was all but caught out by Sam Newton; and East-Woodhay triumphed, and Hazelby sat quaking; when a sudden glimpse of Letty, watching him with manifest anxiety, recalled her champion's wandering thoughts. Gathering himself up he stood before the wicket another man; knocked the ball hither and thither, to the turnpike, the coppice, the pond; got three, four, five at a hit; baffled the slow bowler James Smith, and the fast bowler Tom Taylor; got fifty-five notches off his own bat; stood out all the rest of his side; and so handled the adverse party when they went in, that the match was won at a single innings, with six-and-thirty runs to spare.

Whilst his mates were discussing their victory, Paul Holton again approached the father and daughter, and this time she did not run away: "Letty, dear Letty," said he; "three years ago I lost the cricket-match and you were angry, and I was a fool. But Letty, dear Letty, this match is won; and if you could but know how deeply I have repented, how earnestly I have

longed for this day! The world has gone well-with me, Letty, for these three long years. I have wanted nothing but the treasure which I myself threw away, and now, if you would but let your father be my father, and my home your home!—if you would but forgive me, Letty!"

Letty's answer is not upon record: but it is certain that Paul Holton walked home from the cricket-ground that evening with old John Dale hanging on one arm, and John Dale's pretty daughter on the other; and that a month after the bells of Hazelby church were ringing merrily in honour of one of the fairest and luckiest matches that ever cricketer lost and won.

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

AMY LLOYD.

ONE fine sunshiny March morning, a lady, driving herself in a poney-carriage through Aberleigh lane, stopped beside a steep bank to look at a little girl and her dog in the adjoining field. The hedge had been closely cut, except where a tuft of hazel with its long tassels hung over some broom in full flower, and a straggling bush of the white blossomed sloe was mixed with some branches of palms, from which the bees were already gathering honey. The little girl was almost as busy as the bees: she was gathering violets, white violets and blue, with which the sunny bank was covered; and her little dog was barking at a flock of sheep feeding in that part of the field, for it was a turnip field that was hurdled off for their use. The dog was a small French spaniel, one of the prettiest ever seen, with long curly hair, snow white, except that the ears and three or four spots on the body were

yellow ; large feathered feet, and bright black eyes : just the sort of dog of which fine ladies love to make pets.

It was curious to see this beautiful little creature, driving before it a great flock of sheep, ewes, lambs, and all—for sheep are sad cowards ! And then, when driven to the hurdles, the sheep, cowards though they were, were forced to turn about ; how they would take courage at sight of their enemy, advancing a step or two and pretending to look brave ; then it was diverting to see how the little spaniel, frightened itself, would draw back barking towards its mistress, almost as sad a coward as the sheep. The lady sat watching their proceedings with great amusement, and at last addressed the little girl, a nice lass of ten years' old in deep mourning.

" Whose pretty little dog is that my dear ? " asked the lady.

" Mine, madam," was the answer.

" And where did you get it ? The breed is not common."

" It belonged to poor mamma. Poor papa brought it from France." And the look and the tone told at once that poor Amy was an orphan.

" And you and the pretty dog—what's its name ? " said the lady, interrupting herself.

" Flossy, ma'am—dear Flossy ! " And Amy stooped

to stroke the curly, silky, glossy coat which had probably gained Flossy his appellation; and Flossy in return jumped on his young mistress, and danced about her with tenfold glee.

“ You and Flossy live hereabout ?” inquired the lady.

“ Close by, ma’am; at Court farm, with my uncle and aunt Lloyd.”

“ And you love Flossy ?” resumed the lady;—“ You would not like to part with him ?”

“ Part with Flossy !” cried Amy. “ Part with my own Flossy !”—and she flung down her violets, and caught her faithful pet in her arms, as if fearful of its being snatched away; and Flossy, as if partaking of the fear, nestled up to his young mistress, and pressed his head against her cheek.

“ Do not be alarmed, my dear,” replied the lady, preparing to drive on; “ I am not going to steal your favourite, but I would give five guineas for a dog like him; and if ever you meet with such a one, you have only to send it to Lumley castle. I am Lady Lumley,” added she. “ Good morning, love ! Farewell, Flossy !” And, with a kind nod, the lady and the pony-chaise passed rapidly by; and Amy and Flossy returned to Court farm.

Amy was an orphan, and had only lately come to live with her good uncle and aunt Lloyd, rough honest country people; and being a shy meek-spirited child,

who had just lost most affectionate parents, and had been used to soft voices and gentle manners, was so frightened at the loud speech of the farmer and the blunt ways of his wife, that she ran away from them as often as she could, and felt as forlorn and desolate as any little girl can do who has early learnt the blessed lesson of reliance on the Father of all. Her chief comfort at Court farm was to pet Flossy and to talk to old Dame Clewer, the charwoman, who had been her own mother's nurse.

Dame Clewer had known better days; but having married late in life, and been soon left a widow, she had toiled early and late to bring up an only son; and all her little earnings had gone to apprentice him to a carpenter and keep him decently clothed; and he, although rather lively and thoughtless, was a dutiful and grateful son, and being now just out of his time, had gone to the next town to try to get work, and hoped to repay his good mother all her care and kindness by supporting her out of his earnings. He had told his mother so when setting off the week before, and she had repeated it with tears in her eyes to Amy—tears of joy; and Amy on her return to the house, went immediately in search of her old friend, whom she knew to be washing there, partly to hear over again the story of Thomas Clewer's goodness, partly to tell her own adventure with Lady Lumley.

In the drying yard, as she expected, Amy found Dame Clewer ; not however, as she expected, smiling and busy, and delighted to see Miss Amy, but sitting on the ground by the side of the clothes-basket, her head buried in her hands, and sobbing as if her heart would break. "What could be the matter? Why did she cry so?" asked Amy. And Dame Clewer, unable to resist the kind interest evinced by the affectionate child, told her briefly the cause of her distress.— "Thomas had enlisted!" How few words may convey a great sorrow!—"Thomas was gone for a soldier!"—And the poor mother flung herself at her length on the ground, and gasped and sobbed as though she would never speak again.

"Gone for a soldier!" exclaimed Amy—"Left you! Oh, he never can be so cruel, so wicked! He'll come back, dear nurse!" (for Amy always called Dame Clewer nurse, as her mother had been used to do.) "He'll be sure to come back! Thomas is such a good son, with all his wildness. He'll come back—I know he will."

"He can't!" replied poor nurse, trying to rouse herself from her misery. "He can't come, how much so ever he may wish it; they'll not let him. Nothing can get him off but money, and I have none to give." And again the mother's tears choked her words. "My poor boy must go!"

"Money!" said Amy, "I have half a crown, that godmamma gave me, and two shillings and three sixpences; I'll go and fetch them in a moment."

"Blessings on your dear heart!" sobbed Dame Clewer; "your little money would be of no use. The soldier who came to tell me, offered to get him off for five pounds: but where am I to get five pounds? All my goods and all my clothes would not raise near such a sum: and even if any body was willing to lend money to a poor old creature like me, how should I ever be able to pay it? No! Thomas must go—go to the East Indies, as the soldier said, to be killed by the sword or to die of the fever!—I shall never see his dear face again! Never!" And turning resolutely from the pitying child, she bent over the clothes in the basket, trying to unfold them with her trembling hands and to hang them out to dry; but, unable in her agony to separate the wet linen, she burst into a passion of tears, and stood leaning against the clothes' line, which quivered and vibrated at every sob, as if sensible of the poor mother's misery.

Amy on her part, sat on the steps leading to the house, watching her in silent pity. "Oh, if mamma were alive!" thought the little girl—"or papa! or if I dared ask aunt Lloyd! or if I had the money of my own; or any thing that would fetch the money!" And just as she was thinking this very thought, Floss,

wondering to see his little mistress so still and sad, crept up to her, and put his paw in her lap and whined. "Dear Floss!" said Amy unconsciously, and then suddenly remembering what Lady Lumley had said to her, she took the dog up in her arms, and coloured like scarlet, from a mingled emotion of pleasure and pain, for Flossy had been her own mamma's dog, and Amy loved him dearly. For full five minutes she sat hugging Flossy and kissing his sleek shining head, whilst the faithful creature licked her cheeks and her hands, and nestled up to her bosom, and strove all he could to prove his gratitude, and return her caresses. For full five minutes she sat without speaking; at last she went to Dame Clewer, and gave the dog into her arms.

"Lady Lumley offered me five guineas for Flossy this morning," said she; "take him, dear nurse, and take the money; but beg her to be kind to him," continued poor Amy, no longer able to restrain her tears—"beg her to be very kind to my Floss!" And, with a heart too full even to listen to the thanks and blessings which the happy mother was showering upon her head, the little girl turned away.

But did Lady Lumley buy Flossy? And was Thomas Clewer discharged? Yes, Thomas was discharged, for Sir John Lumley spoke to his colonel; and he returned to his home and his fond mother, quite cured

of his wildness and his fancy for being a soldier. But Lady Lumley did not buy Floss, because, as she said, however she might like him, she never could bear to deprive so good a girl as Amy of any thing that gave her pleasure. She would not buy Floss, but she continued to take great notice both of him and his little mistress, had them often at the castle, always made Amy a Christmas present, and talks of taking her for her own maid when she grows up.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.



THE COBBLER OVER THE WAY.

ONE of the noisiest inhabitants of the small irregular town * of Cranley, in which I had the honour to be born, was a certain cobbler, by name Jacob Giles. He lived exactly over-right our house, in a little appendage to the baker's shop,—an excrescence from that goodly tenement, which, when the door was closed (for the tiny square window at its side was all but invisible), might, from its shape and its dimensions, be mistaken for an oven or a pigstye, *ad libitum*. By day, when the half-hatch was open, and the cobbler discovered at work within, his dwelling seemed constructed purposely to hold his figure; as nicely adapted to its size and motions, as the little toy called a weather-house is to the height and functions of the puppets who inhabit it;

* Townlet old Leland would have called it, and truly the word is worth borrowing.

—only that Jacob Giles's stall was less accommodating than the weather-house, inasmuch as by no chance could his apartment have been made to contain two inmates in any position whatsoever.

At that half-hatch might Jacob Giles be seen stitching and stitching, with the peculiar regular two-handed jerk proper to the art of cobbling, from six in the morning to six at night,—deducting always certain mornings and afternoons and whole days given, whenever his purse or his credit would permit, to the ensnaring seductions of the tap-room at the King's-head. At all other seasons at the half-hatch he might be seen, looking so exactly like a Dutch picture, that I, simple child that I was, took a fine Teniers in my father's possession for a likeness of him. There he sat—with a dirty red night-cap over his grizzled hair, a dingy waist-coat, an old blue coat, darned, patched and ragged, a greasy leather apron, a pair of crimson plush inexpressibles, worsted stockings of all the colours known in hosiery, and shoes that illustrated the old saying of the shoemaker's wife, by wanting mending more than any shoes in the parish.

The face belonging to this costume was rough and weather-beaten, deeply lined and deeply tinted, of a right copper-colour, with a nose that would have done honour to Bardolph, and a certain indescribable half-tipsy look, even when sober. Nevertheless, the face,

ugly and tipsy as it was, had its merits. There was humour in the wink and in the nod, and in the knowing roll with which he transferred the quid of tobacco, his constant recreation and solace, from one cheek to the other; there was good-humour in the half-shut eye, the pursed-up mouth, and the whole jolly visage; and in the countless variety of strange songs and ballads which, from morning to night he poured forth from that half-hatch, there was a happy mixture of both. There he sat, in that small den, looking something like a thrush in a goldfinch's cage, and singing with as much power, and far wider range,—albeit his notes were hardly so melodious:—Jobson's songs in the 'Devil to Pay,' and

“A cobbler there was, and he lived in a stall,
Which served him for parlour, for kitchen and hall,”

being his favourites.

The half-hatch was, however, incomparably the best place in which to see him, for his face, with all its grotesqueness, was infinitely pleasanter to look at than his figure, one of his legs being shorter than the other, which obliged him to use a crutch, and the use of the crutch having occasioned a protuberance of the shoulder, which very nearly invested him with the dignity of a hump. Little cared he for his lameness! He swung along merrily and rapidly, especially when his steps tended to the alehouse, where he was a man of prime

importance, not merely in right of his good songs and his good-fellowship, but in graver moments, as a scholar and a politician, being the best reader of a newspaper, and the most sagacious commentator on a debate, of any man who frequented the tap, the parish clerk himself not excepted.

Jacob Giles had, as he said, some right to talk about the welfare of old England, having, at one time of his life, been a householder, shopkeeper, and elector (N.B. his visits to the ale-house may account for his descent from the shop to the stall) in the neighbouring borough of D., a place noted for the frequency and virulence of its contested elections. There was no event of his life on which our cobbler piqued himself so much as on having, as he affirmed, assisted in 'saving his country,' by forming one of the glorious majority of seven, by which a Mr. Brown, of those days, a silent, stupid, respectable country gentleman, a dead vote on one side of the house, ousted a certain Mr. Smith, also a country gentleman, equally silent, stupid, and respectable, and a dead vote on the other side. Which parties in the state these two worthy senators espoused, it was somewhat difficult to gather from the zealous champion of the victorious hero. Local politics have commonly very little to do with any general question: the blues or the yellows, the greens or the reds—colours, not principles, predominate at an election,—which, in

this respect, as well as in the ardour of the contest, and the quantity of money risked on the event, bears no small resemblance to a horse-race.

Whatever might have been the party of his favourite candidate, Jacob himself was a Tory of the very first water. His residence at Cranley was during the later days of the French revolution, when Loyalty and Republicanism, Pittite and Foxite divided the land. Jacob Giles was a Tory, a Pittite, a Church-and-King, and Life-and-Fortune man—the loudest of the loyal; held Buonaparte for an incarnation of the evil spirit, and established an Anti-Gallican club at the King's Head, where he got tipsy every Saturday-night for the good of the nation. Nothing could exceed the warmth of Jacob's loyalty. He even wanted to join the Cranley volunteers, quoting to the drill serjeant, who quietly pointed to the crutch and the shoulder, the notable examples of Captain Green who halted, and Lieutenant Jones who was awry, as precedents for his own eligibility. The hump and the limp united were, however, too much to be endured. The man of scarlet declared there was no such piece of deformity in the whole awkward squad, and Jacob was declared inadmissible;—a personal slight (to say nothing of his being debarred the privilege of shedding his blood in defence of the king and constitution) which our cobbler found so hard to bear, that with the least encouragement in the world from

the Opposition of Cranley, he would have ratted. One word of sympathy would have carried Mr. Giles, and his songs and his tipseyness to the 'Russel-and-Sidney Club' (Jacobins Jacob used to call them), at the Greyhound; but the Jacobins laughed, and lost their proselyte; the Anti-Gallicans retained Jacob,—and Jacob retained his consistency.

How my friend the cobbler came to be theoretically so violent an Anti-jacobin is best known to himself. For certain he was in practice far more of what would in these days be called a radical; was constantly infringing the laws which he esteemed so perfect, and bringing into contempt the authorities for which he professed such enthusiastic veneration. Drunk or sober, in his own quarrels, or in the quarrels of others, he waged a perpetual war with justice; hath been seen to snap his fingers at an order of sessions, the said order having for object the removal of a certain barrel-organ man, 'his ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;' and got into a *demelé* with the church in the person of the old sexton, whom he nearly knocked down with the wind of his cruteh (N.B. Jacob took care not to touch the old man) for driving away his clients, the boys who were playing at marbles on the tomb-stones. Besides these skirmishes, he was in a state of constant hostility with the officials called constables; and had not his reputation, good or bad, stood him in stead, his Saturday-

nights' exploits would have brought him acquainted with half the roundhouses, bridewells, stocks, and whipping-posts in the county. His demerits brought him off. "It's only that merry rogue, Jacob!" said the lenient: "only that sad dog, the cobbler!" cried the severe: and between these contrary epithets, which in Master Giles's case bore so exactly the same meaning, the poor cobbler escaped.

In good truth, it would have been a pity if Jacob's hebdomadal deviations from the straight path had brought him into any serious scrape, for, tipsy or sober, a better-natured creature never lived. Poor as he was, he had always something for those poorer than himself; would share his scanty dinner with a starving beggar, and his last quid of tobacco with a crippled sailor. The children came to him for nuts and apples, for comical stories and droll songs; the very curs of the street knew that they had a friend in the poor cobbler. He even gave away his labour and his time. Many a shoe hath he heeled with a certainty that the wretched pauper could not pay him; and many a job, extra-official, hath he turned his hand to, with no expectation of fee or reward. The 'Cobbler over the way' was the constant resource of every body in want of a help, and whatever the station or circumstances of the person needing him, his services might be depended on to the best of his power.

For my own part, I can recollect Jacob Giles as long as I can recollect any thing. He made the shoes for my first doll—(pink I remember they were)—a doll called Sophy, who had the misfortune to break her neck by a fall from the nursery window; Jacob Giles made her pink slippers, and mended all the shoes of the family, with whom he was a universal favourite. My father delighted in his statesmanship, which must have been very entertaining; my mother in his benevolence; and I in his fun. He used to mimic Punch for my amusement; and I once greatly affronted the real Punch, by preferring the cobbler's performance of the closing scenes. Jacob was a general favourite in our family; and one member of it was no small favourite of Jacob's: that person was neither more nor less than my nursery-maid, Nancy Dawson.

Nancy Dawson was the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood, a lively, clever girl, more like a French *soubrette* than an English maid-servant, *gentille* and *espiègle*; not a regular beauty,—hardly perhaps pretty; but with bright laughing eyes, a ready smile, a pleasant speech, and altogether as dangerous a person for an opposite neighbour as an old bachelor could desire. Jacob became seriously enamoured; wasted half his mornings in watching our windows, for my nursery looked out upon the street; and limped after us every afternoon when she took me (a small damsel of three

years old, or thereabout) out walking. He even left off his tobacco, his worsted night-cap, his tipsyness, and his Saturday-night's club; got a whole coat to his back, set a patch on his shoe, and talked of taking a shop and settling in life. This, however, was nothing wonderful. Nancy's charms might have fired a colder heart than beat in the bosom of Jacob Giles. But that Nancy should 'abase her eyes' on him: there was the marvel. Nancy! who had refused Peter Green the grocer, and John Keep the butcher, and Sir Henry's smart gamekeeper, and our own tall footman! Nancy to think of a tippling cripple like the cobbler over the way,—that was something to wonder at!

Nancy, when challenged on the subject, neither denied nor assented to the accusation. She answered very demurely that her young lady liked Mr. Giles, that he made the child laugh, and was handy with her, and was a careful person to leave her with if she had to go on an errand for her mistress or the housekeeper. So Jacob continued our walking footman.

Our walks were all in one direction. About a mile south of Cranley was a large and beautiful coppice, at one corner of which stood the cottage of the woodman, a fine young man, William Cotton by name, whose sister Mary was employed by my mother as a sempstress. The wood, the cottage, and the cottage garden, were separated by a thick hedge and wide ditch from a wild

broken common covered with sheep—a common full of turf knolls and thymy banks, where the heath-flower and the hare-bell blew profusely, and where the sun poured forth a flood of glory on the golden-blossomed broom. To one corner of this common,—a sunny nook covered with little turf hillocks, originally, I suppose, formed by the moles, but which I used to call Cock-Robins' graves,—Nancy generally led; and there she would frequently, almost constantly, leave me under Jacob's protection whilst she jumped over a stile inaccessible to my little feet, sometimes to take a message to Mary Cotton, sometimes to get me flowers from the wood, sometimes for blackberries, sometimes for nuts,—but always on some ostensible and well-sounding errand.

Nancy's absences, however, became longer and longer; and one evening Jacob and I grew mutually fidgetty. He had told his drollest stories, made his most comical faces, and played Punch twice over to divert me; but I was tired and cross; it was getting late in the autumn; the weather was cold; the sun had gone down; and I began to cry amain for home and for papa. Jacob, much distressed by my plight, partly to satisfy me, and partly to allay his own irritability, deposited me in the warmest nook he could find, and scrambled over the stile in search of Nancy. Voices in the wood—her voice and William's guided him to

the spot where she and the young forester sate side by side at the foot of an oak tree; and, unseen by the happy couple, the poor cobbler overheard the following dialogue.

“ On Saturday then, Nancy, I may give in the banns. You are sure that your mistress will let your sister take your place till she is suited ?”

“ Quite sure,” rejoined Nancy ; “ she is so kind.”

“ And on Monday fortnight the wedding is to be. Remember, not an hour later than eight o'clock on Monday fortnight. Consider how long I have waited—almost half a year.”

“ Well !” said Nancy, “ at eight o'clock on Monday fortnight.”

“ And the cobbler !” cried William ; “ that excellent under-nurse, who is waiting so contentedly on our little lady at the other side of the hedge”—

“ Ah, the poor cobbler !” interrupted Nancy.

“ We'll ask him to the wedding-dinner,” added William.

“ Yes; the poor cobbler !” continued the saucy maiden ; “ my old lover, the ‘ Cobbler over the way,’ we'll certainly ask him to the wedding-dinner. It will comfort him.”

And to the wedding-dinner the cobbler went ; and he was comforted :—he kissed the pretty bride ; he shook hands with the handsome bridegroom, resumed his red

cap and his tobacco, got tipsy to his heart's content,
and reeled home, singing ' God save the king,' right
happy to find himself still a bachelor.

PATTY'S NEW HAT.

WANDERING about the meadows one morning last May, absorbed in the pastoral beauty of the season and the scenery, I was overtaken by a heavy shower just as I passed old Mrs. Matthews's great farmhouse, and forced to run for shelter to her hospitable porch. A pleasant shelter in good truth I found there. The green pastures dotted with fine old trees stretching all around; the clear brook winding about them turning and returning on its course, as if loath to depart; the rude cart-track leading through the ford; the neater pathway with its foot-bridge; the village spire rising amongst a cluster of cottages, all but the roofs and chimneys concealed by a grove of oaks; the woody back-ground, and the blue hills in the distance, all so flowery and bowery in the pleasant month of May; the nightingales singing; the bells ringing; and the porch itself, around which a honeysuckle in full bloom was wreathing its sweet flowers, giving out such an

odour in the rain, as in dry weather nothing but the twilight will bring forth—an atmosphere of fragrance. The whole porch was alive and musical with bees, who, happy rogues, instead of being routed by the wet, only folded their wings the closer, and dived the deeper into the honey-tubes, enjoying, as it seemed, so good an excuse for creeping still farther within their flowery lodgement. It is hard to say which enjoyed the sweet breath of the shower and the honeysuckle most, the bees or I; but the rain began to drive so fast, that at the end of five minutes I was not sorry to be discovered by a little girl belonging to the family; and, first, ushered into the spacious kitchen, with its heavy oak table, its curtained chimney corner, its bacon rack loaded with enormous flitches, and its ample dresser, glittering with crockery ware; and, finally, conducted by Mrs. Matthews herself into her own comfortable parlour, and snugly settled there with herself and her eldest grand-daughter, a woman grown; whilst the younger sister, a smiling light-footed lass of eleven or thereabouts, tripped off to find a boy to convey a message to my family, requesting them to send for me, the rain being now too decided to admit of any prospect of my walking home.

The sort of bustle which my reception had caused having subsided, I found great amusement in watching my hospitable hostess, and listening to a dialogue, if

so it may be called, between her pretty grand-daughter and herself, which at once let me into a little love secret, and gave me an opportunity of observing one, of whose occasional oddities I had all my life heard a great deal.

Mrs Matthews was one of the most remarkable persons in these parts ; a capital farmer, a most intelligent parish officer, and in her domestic government not a little resembling one of the finest sketches which Mr. Crabbe's graphical pen ever produced.

“ Next died the widow Goe, an active dame
Famed ten miles round and worthy all her fame ;
She lost her husband when their loves were young,
But kept her farm, her credit, and her tongue :
Full thirty years she ruled with matchless skill,
With guiding judgment and resistless will ;
Advice she scorned, rebellions she suppressed,
And sons and servants bowed at her behest.
No parish business in the place could stir
Without direction or assent from her ;
In turn she took each office as it fell,
Knew all their duties and discharged them well.
She matched both sons and daughters to her mind,
And lent them eyes, for love she heard was blind.”

Parish Register.

Great power of body and mind was visible in her robust person and massive countenance; and there was both humour and intelligence in her acute smile, and in the keen grey eye that glanced from under her spectacles. All that she said bore the stamp of sense; but at this time she was in no talking mood, and on my begging that I might cause no interruption, resumed her seat and her labours in silent composure. She sat at a little table mending a fustian jacket belonging to one of her sons—a sort of masculine job which suited her much better than a more delicate piece of sempstress-ship would probably have done; indeed the tailors' needle, which she brandished with great skill, the whity-brown thread tied round her neck, and the huge dull-looking *shears* (one can't make up one's mind to call such a machine scissors), which in company with an enormous pincushion dangled from her apron-string, figuring as the pendant to a most formidable bunch of keys, formed altogether such a working apparatus as shall hardly be matched in these days of polished cutlery and cobwebby cotton-thread.

On the other side of the little table sat her pretty grand-daughter Patty, a black-eyed young woman, with a bright complexion, a neat trim figure, and a general air of gentility considerably above her station. She was trimming a very smart straw hat with pink

ribbons ; trimming and untrimming, for the bows were tied and untied, taken off and put on, and taken off again, with a look of impatience and discontent, not common to a damsel of seventeen when contemplating a new piece of finery. The poor little lass was evidently out of sorts. She sighed, and quirked, and fidgetted, and seemed ready to cry ; whilst her grandmother just glanced at her from under her spectacles, pursed up her mouth, and contrived with some difficulty not to laugh. At last Patty spoke.

" Now, grandmother, you will let me go to Chapel Row revel this afternoon, won't you ?"

" Humph," said Mrs. Matthews.

" It hardly rains at all, grandmother !"

" Humph !" again said Mrs. Matthews, opening the prodigious scissors with which she was amputating, so to say, a button, and directing the rounded end significantly to my wet shawl, whilst the sharp point was reverted towards the dripping honeysuckle.

" Humph !"

" There's no dirt to signify !"

Another " Humph !" and another point to the dragged tail of my white gown.

" At all events, it's going to clear."

Two " Humphs !" and two points, one to the clouds, and one to the barometer.

"It's only seven miles," said Patty; "and if the horses are wanted, I can walk."

"Humph!" quoth Mrs. Matthews.

"My aunt Ellis will be there, and my cousin Mary"

"Humph!" again said Mrs. Matthews.

"And if a person is coming here on business, what can I be wanted for when you are at home, grandmother?"

"Humph!" once again was the answer.

"What business can any one have with me?"

Another "Humph!"

"My cousin Mary will be so disappointed!"

"Humph!"

"And I half promised my cousin William—poor William!"

"Humph!" again.

"Poor William! Oh, grandmother, do let me go! And I've got my new hat and all—just such a hat as William likes! Poor William! You will let me go, grandmother?"

And receiving no answer but a very unequivocal "Humph!" poor Patty threw down her straw hat, fetched a deep sigh, and sate in a most disconsolate attitude, snipping her pink ribbon to pieces; Mrs. Matthews went on manfully with her "stitchery;" and for ten minutes there was a dead pause. It was

at length broken by my little friend and introducer, Susan, who was standing at the window, and exclaimed—"Who is this riding up the meadow all through the rain? Look!—see!—I do think—no, it can't be—yes, it is—it is certainly my cousin William Ellis! Look, grandmother!"

"Humph!" said Mrs. Matthews.

"What can cousin William be coming for?" continued Susan.

"Humph!" quoth Mrs. Matthews.

"Oh, I know!—I know!" screamed Susan, clapping her hands and jumping for joy as she saw the changed expression of Patty's countenance,—the beaming delight, succeeded by a pretty downcast shamefacedness, as she turned away from her grandmother's arch smile and archer nod. "I know!—I know!" shouted Susan.

"Humph!" said Mrs. Matthews.

"For shame, Susan! Pray don't, grandmother!" said Patty, imploringly.

"For shame! Why I did not say he was coming to court Patty! Did I, grandmother?" returned Susan.

"And I take this good lady to witness," replied Mrs. Matthews, as Patty, gathering up her hat and her scraps of ribbon, prepared to make her escape—

"I take you all to witness that I have said nothing of any sort. Get along with you Patty!" added she, "you have spoiled your pink trimming; but I think you are likely to want white ribbons next, and, if you put me in mind, I'll buy them for you!" And, smiling in spite of herself, the happy girl ran out of the room.

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

THE MAGPIES.

"COME along girls! Helen! Caroline! I say, don't stand jabbering there upon the stairs, but come down this instant, or Dash and I will be off without you."

This elegant speech was shouted from the bottom of the great staircase at Dinely-Hall, by young George Dinely, an Etonian of eleven years old, just come home for the holidays, to his two younger sisters who stood disputing very ardently in French at the top. The cause of contention was, to say the truth, no greater an object than the colour of a work-bag, which they were about to make for their mamma: slate lined with pink being the choice of Miss Caroline, whilst Miss Helen preferred drab with a blue lining.

"Don't stand quarrelling there about the colour of your trumpery," added George, "but come along!"

Now George would have scorned to know a syllable of any language except Latin and Greek, but neither of

the young ladies being Frenchwoman enough to construe the appellation of the leading article, the words "drab" and "slate," which came forth in native English pretty frequently, as well as the silk dangling in their hands, had enlightened him as to the matter in dispute.

George was a true schoolboy, rough and kind; affecting perhaps more roughness than naturally belonged to him, from a mistaken notion that it made him look bold, and English, and manly. There cannot be a greater mistake, since the boldest man is commonly the mildest, thus realizing in every way the expression of Shakspeare, which has been the subject of a somewhat unnecessary commentary, "He's gentle and not fearful." For the rest our hero loved his sisters, which was very right; and loved to teaze them, which was very wrong; and now he and his dog Dash, both wild with spirits and with happiness, were waiting most impatiently to go down to the village on a visit to old Nurse Simmons and her magpie.

Nurse Simmons was a very good and very cross old woman, who after ruling in the nursery of Dinely-Hall for two generations, scolding and spoiling Sir Edward and his brothers, and performing thirty years afterwards the same good office for Master George and his sisters, had lately abdicated her throne on the arrival of a French governess, and was now comfortably settled at a cottage of her own in the village street.

George Dinely and Dash had already that morning visited George's own poney, and his father's brood mares, the garden, the stables, the pheasantry, the greenhouse and the farm-yard; had seen a brood of curious bantams, two litters of pigs, and a family of greyhound puppies, and had few friends, old or new, left to visit except Nurse Simmons, her cottage and her magpie, a bird of such accomplishments, that his sisters had even made it the subject of a letter to Eton. The magpie might perhaps claim an equal share with his mistress in George's impatience, and Dash always eager to get out of doors, seemed nearly as fidgetty as his young master.

Dash was as beautiful a dog as one should see in a summer's day; one of the large old English spaniels, which are now so rare, with a superb head like those that you see in Spanish pictures, and such ears! they more than met over his pretty spotted nose, and when he lapped his milk dipped into the pan at least two inches. His hair was long and shiny and wavy, not curly, partly of a rich dark liver colour, partly of a silvery white, and beautifully feathered about the legs and thighs. Every body used to wonder that Dash, who apparently ate so little, should be in such good case; but the marvel was by no means so great as it seemed, for his being George's peculiar pet and property did not hinder his being the universal favourite

of the whole house, from the drawing-room to the kitchen. Not a creature could resist Dash's silent supplications at meal times, when he sat upon his haunches looking amiable, with his large ears brought into their most becoming position, his head a little on one side, and his beautiful eyes fixed on your face, with as near an approach to speech as ever eyes made in the world. From Sir Edward and her Ladyship down to the stable-boy and the kitchen-maid, no inhabitant of Dinely Hall could resist Dash! So that being a dog of most apprehensive sagacity with regard to the hours appropriated to the several refectations of the family, he usually contrived, between the dining parlour, the school-room, and the servants' hall, to partake of three breakfasts and as many dinners every day, to say nothing of an occasional snap at luncheon or supper-time. No wonder that Dash was in high condition. His good plight, however, had by no means impaired his activity. On the contrary, he was extremely lively as well as intelligent, and had a sort of circular motion, a way of flinging himself quite round on his hind feet, something after the fashion in which the French dancers twirl themselves round on one leg, which not only shewed unusual agility in a dog of his size, but gave token of the same spirit and animation which sparkled in his bright hazel eye. Any thing of eagerness or impatience was sure to excite this motion, and George Dinely

gravely assured his sisters, when they at length joined him in the hall, that Dash had flung himself round six and twenty times whilst waiting the conclusion of their quarrel.

Getting out into the lawn and the open air, did not tend to diminish Dash's glee or his capers, and the young party walked merrily on; George telling of school pranks and school misfortunes—the having lost or spoilt four hats since Easter seemed rather to belong to the first class of adventures than the second,—his sisters listening dutifully and wonderingly; and Dash following his own devices, now turning up a mouse's nest from a water furrow in the park,—now springing a covey of young partridges in a corn-field,—now plunging his whole hairy person in the brook,—and now splashing Miss Helen from head to foot by ungallantly jumping over her whilst crossing a stile, being thereunto prompted by a whistle from his young master, who had with equal want of gallantry, leapt the stile first himself, and left his sisters to get over as they could; until at last the whole party, having passed the stile, and crossed the bridge, and turned the Church-yard corner, found themselves in the shady recesses of the Vicarage-lane, and in full view of the vine-covered cottage of Nurse Simmons.

As they advanced they heard a prodigious chattering and jabbering, and soon got near enough to ascertain

that the sound proceeded mainly from one of the parties they were come to visit—Nurse Simmons's magpie. He was perched in the middle of the road, defending a long dirty bare bone of mutton, doubtless his property, on one end of which he stood, whilst the other extremity was occupied by a wild bird of the same species, who, between pecking at the bone, and fighting, and scolding, found full employment. The wild magpie was a beautiful creature, as wild magpies are, of a snowy white and a fine blue black, perfect in shape and plumage, and so superior in appearance to the tame bird, ragged, draggled and dirty, that they hardly seemed of the same kind. Both were chattering away most furiously; the one in his natural and unintelligible gibberish, the other partly in his native tongue, and partly in that, for his skill in which he was so eminent,—thus turning his accomplishments to an unexpected account, and larding his own lean speech with divers foreign garnishes, such as "What's o'clock?" and "How do you do?" and "Very well I thank you," and "Poor pretty Mag!" and "Mag's a good bird,"—all delivered in the most vehement accent, and all doubtless understood by the unlearned adversary as terms of reproach.

"What can those two magpies be quarrelling about?" said Caroline, as soon as she could speak for laughing; for on the children's approach the birds had abandoned

the mutton bone, which had been quietly borne away by Dash, who in spite of his usual sumptuous fare had no objection to such a windfall, and was lying in great state on a mossy bank, discussing and enjoying the stolen morsel.

"What a fury they are in! I wish I knew what they were saying," pursued Caroline, as the squabble grew every moment more angry and less intelligible.

"They are talking nonsense, doubtless, as people commonly do when they quarrel," quoth George, "and act wisely to clothe it in a foreign tongue; perhaps they may be disputing about colours."

"What an odd noise it is!" continued Caroline, by no means disposed to acknowledge her brother's compliment; "I never heard any thing like it."

"I have;" said George drily.

"I wonder whether they comprehend each other!" ejaculated Miss Helen, following her sister's example, and taking no notice of the provoking George; "they really do seem to understand."

"As well as other magpies," observed the young gentleman, "why should they not?"

"But what strange gibberish!" added poor Helen.

"Gibberish, Miss Helen! Don't you hear that the birds are sputtering magpie French, sprinkled with a little magpie English? I was just going to ask you to explain it to me," replied the unmerciful George.

"It is quite a parody upon your work-bag squabble," pursued their tormentor; "only that the birds are the wiser, for I see they are parting,—the wild one flying away, the tame gentleman hopping towards us. Quite the scene of the work-bag over again," continued George, "only with less noise, and much shortened—an abridged and corrected edition! Really, young ladies, the magpies have the best of it," said the Etonian, and off he stalked into Nurse Simmons's Cottage.

COTTAGE NAMES.

‘ Why Lonicera wilt thou name thy child ?’
I ask’d the gardener’s wife in accents mild.
‘ We have a right,’ replied the sturdy dame,
And Lonicera was the infant’s name.

CRABBE.

‘ A commodity of good names.’ SHAKESPEARE.

FROM the time of Goldsmith down to the present day fine names have been the ridicule of comic authors, and the aversion of sensible people, notwithstanding which the evil has increased almost in proportion to its reprobation. Miss Clementina Wilhelmina Stubbs was but a type of the Julias, the Isabels, and the Helens of this accomplished age. I should not, however, so much mind if this folly were comprised in that domain of cold gentility, to which affectation usually confines itself. One does not regard seeing Miss

Arabella seated at the piano, or her little sister Leonora tottling across the carpet to show her new pink shoes. That is in the usual course of events. But the fashion spreads deeper and wider ; the village is infected, and the village green ; Amelias and Claras sweep your rooms and cook your dinners, gentle Sophias milk your cows, and if you ask a pretty smiling girl at a cottage door to tell you her name, the rosy lips lisp out Caroline *. It was but the other day that I went into a neighbour's to procure a messenger, and found the errand disputed by a gentle Georgina without a shoe, and a fair Augusta with half a frock. Now this is a sad thing. One looks upon cottage names as a part of cottage furniture, of the costume, and is as much discomposed by the change as a painter of interiors would be who should find a Grecian couch instead of an oaken settle by the side of the wide open hearth. In fine houses fine names do not signify ; though I would humbly suggest to godfathers and godmothers, papas, mammas, maiden aunts, nurses, and gossips in general, the unconscious injury that they are doing to novelists

* A great number of children, amongst the lower orders, are Carolines. That does not, however, wholly proceed from a love of the appellation ; though I believe that a queen Margery or a queen Sarah would have had fewer name-sakes. A clergyman in my neighbourhood used to mistake the sound, and christen the babies Catharine ;—a wise error for Kate is a noble abbreviation.

poets, dramatic writers, and the whole fraternity of authors, by trespassing on their (nominal) property, infringing their patent, encroaching on their privilege, underselling their stock in trade, depreciating their currency, and finally robbing poor heroes and heroines of their solitary possession, the only thing they can call their own. Shakspeare has an admonition much to the purpose, 'he who filches from me my *good name*,' and so forth. Did they never hear *that*? never see Othello? never read *Elegant Extracts*? never learn the speech by rote out of Enfield's *Speaker*? If they did, I must say the lesson has been as completely thrown away as lessons of morality commonly are. Sponsors in these days think no more harm of 'filching a name' than a sparrow does of robbing a cherry tree.

This, however, is an affair of conscience or of taste, and conscience and taste are delicate points to meddle with, especially the latter. People will please their fancies, and every lady has her favourite names. I myself have several, and they are mostly short and simple. Jane, that queenly name! Jane Seymor, Jane Grey, 'the noble Jane de Monford';—Anne, to which lady seems to belong as of right,—a late celebrated Scottish duke is said to have caused an illegitimate daughter to be so baptized, Lady-Anne, and my friend Allan Cunningham's beautiful ballad has joined the name and the title still more inseparably;—Mary, which

is as common as a white violet, and like that has something indestructibly sweet and simple, and fit for all wear, high or low, suits the cottage or the palace, the garden or the field, the pretty or the ugly, the old or the young;—Margaret, Marguerite—the pearl! the daisy! Oh name of romance and of minstrelsy, which brings the days of chivalry to mind, and the worship of flowers and of ladies fair!—Emily, in which all womanly sweetness seems bound up—perhaps this is the effect of the association of ideas*—I know so many charming Emilys;—and Susan, the sprightly, the gentle, the home-loving, the kind;—association again! But certainly there are some names which seem to belong to particular classes of character, to form the mind and even to influence the destiny: Louisa, now;—is not your Louisa necessarily a die-away damsel, who reads novels, and holds her head on one side, languishing and given to love? Is not Lucy a pretty *soubrette*, a wearer of cast 'gowns and cast smiles, smart and coquettish? Must not Emma, as a matter of course, prove epistolary, if only for the sake of her signature? And is there not great danger that Laura may go a

* There is another association which cannot be forgotten in speaking of Emily. It belongs to Palamon and Arcite, that most fortunate of stories, which comes to us consecrated by the genius of Chaucer, and of Dryden, of Fletcher, and of Shakspeare.

step farther, write poetry and publish? Oh beware, dear godmamas, when you call an innocent baby after Petrarch's muse! Think of the peril! Beware.

Next to names simple in themselves, those which fall easily into diminutives seem to me most desirable. All abbreviations are pretty—Lizzy, Bessy, Sophy, Fanny—the prettiest of all! There is something so familiar, so homelike, so affectionate in the sound,—it seems to tell in one short word a story of family love, to vouch for the amiableness of both parties. I never thought one of the most brilliant and elegant women in England quite so charming as she really is, till I heard her call her younger sister ‘Annie.’ It seemed to remove at once the almost repellant quality which belongs to extreme polish,—gave a genial warmth to her brightness, became her like a smile. There was a tenderness in the voice too, a delay, a dwelling on the double consonant, giving to English something of the charm of Italian pronunciation, which I have noticed only in two persons, who are, I think, the most graceful speakers and readers of my acquaintance. ‘Annie!’ If she had called her sister Anna-Maria according to the register, I should have admired, and feared, and shunned her to my dying day. That little word made us friends immediately. I like manly abbreviations too,—who does not?—they say so much for character. You may know what one man thinks of another by his

manner of calling him. Thomas and James and Richard and William are stupid young gentlemen; Tom and Jem and Dick and Will are fine spirited fellows. Henry now, what a soft swain your Henry is! the proper theme of gentle poesy; a name to fall in love withal; devoted at the font to song and sonnet, and the tender passion; a baptized innamorato; a christened hero. Call him Harry, and see how you ameliorate his condition. The man is free again, turned out of song and sonnet and romance, and young ladies' hearts. Shakspeare understood this well, when he wrote of prince Hal and Harry Hotspur. To have called them Henry would have spoiled both characters. George and Charles are unlucky in this respect; they have no diminutives, and what mouthfuls of monosyllables they are! names royal too, and therefore unshortened. A king must be of a very rare class who should afford to be called by short-hand;—very popular to tempt the rogues, well conditioned to endure it, wise and strong to afford it. Our Harry the Fifth, the conqueror of Azincourt, might and did; and the French Henri Quatre; and now and then a usurper. Niccola Rienzi, Oliver Cromwell, and Napoleon, the noblest of names, have all undergone such transformation; and indeed the Roman tribune, the least known but not perhaps the least remarkable of the three; he who, born of an innkeeper and a washerwoman, restored

for a while the free republic of Rome ; the friend of Petrarch, the arbiter of princes, the summoner of emperors, the arraigner of popes—is scarcely known even in the grave page of history by any other appellation than that of Cola Rienzi—as who should say *Nick*.

I have said that names sometimes form the character. Sometimes, on the other hand, they are like dreams, and become true by contraries ; especially if you christen after the virtues. Thus the wildest flirt of my acquaintance happens to be a Miss Prudentia—a second sister, too, whose elder is not likely to marry, so that the misnomer is palpable ; and the greatest scold I ever encountered, the errantest virago, was a Mrs. Patience. The Graces are usually awkward gawkies, and the Belles all through the Alphabet, from Annabelle downward, are a generation of frights. The Floras are sure to be pale puny girls, and the Roses are apt to wither on the virgin stalk. Call a boy after some distinguished character, and the contradiction grows still more glaring. Your Foxes and Hampdens and Sidneys range themselves on the ministerial benches, your Pitts and Melvilles turn out rank radicals, your Andrew Marvels take bribes, and your Nelsons run away. There is a fatality in those christian surnames, those baptised heathens ; they are sure never to fit, never run well with other names. In the case of females especially, there is a double danger ; even if they seem

to march evenly at first, see how they end. The most remarkable instance of this acquired incongruity I ever knew befell a fair Highlander, one of my schoolfellows. Her mother, claiming to be sprung from the Bruce family, would call her daughter after good king Robert, and nothing could be better matched than her two noble Scottish names, Bruce Campbell: they suited her like her tartan dress. She was a tall, graceful blue-eyed girl, with high spirits and some pride, an air compounded of the palace and the mountain, a sort of wild royalty, and a step that puzzled alike our French dancing-master and our English drill-sergeant,—it was so unlike what either of them taught, so un-French, so un-English, and yet so bounding and free. She left school, and for some years I heard nothing more of her than that she was happily married. Last summer I had the pleasure of meeting a cousin of hers (as near I should think as within the eighth degree), and began immediately to inquire for my fair friend. “I understand,” said I, “that she married early and well?”—“Yes, very,” was the reply; “but she had the misfortune to lose Mr. Smith in the second year of their nuptials. She is now, however, re-married to a Mr. Brown.”—I heard no more! I was petrified. Bruce Smith! Imagine such a conjunction! And now Bruce Brown! fancy that! There is an ‘apt alliteration’ for you! And even if she should take refuge in initials,

think of B. B. ! ' P. P., clerk of this parish,' has the advantage both in look and sound. Oh, your proper names are dangerous ! It is the practice of the Americans, and with them it may perhaps be politic and patriotic to diffuse and perpetuate the memory of their Washingtons and Jeffersons amongst the descendants of the people whom they freed, to give the new generation a sort of personal interest in their fame. But why should we adopt the fashion ? And why should it spread ? as spread it does. Those papas and mamas, who labour under the misfortune of a plebeian surname do the best to lighten the calamity to their offspring by an harmonious and dignified *prænomen*, sometimes taken from friends or acquaintance chosen as sponsors for the good gift of a seemly appellation ; sometimes culled from history ; sometimes from that pseudo-history called a novel ; sometimes from the peerage ; sometimes from the Racing Calendar, which by the bye, does not fail to return the compliment. One ingenious gentleman, in a northern county, even christened his eldest hope after the village in which he was born,—Allonby of Allonby !—How well it looks ! and what a pity that the wretched little word ' Short' should have a right to intrude ! Allonby Short ; ' oh what a falling off was there !'—If the son should have half his father's genius, he will get an act of parliament, and discard it altogether.

The prefixing of a little miserable name to another of the same class is also exceedingly fashionable amongst our *parvenus*. They seem to think that in names, as in figures, value increases tenfold by the addition of a cipher. Hence the unnatural and portentous union of hideous monosyllables on name-tickets and door-plates, where two 'low words oft creep in one dull line.' Hence your White Sharps, your Ford Greens, your Hall Gills, and other appellations of the same *calibre*, which stare you in the face go where you will, and are clung to with a jealous tenacity of which the Percies and Howards and Cavendishes (for whom one name is enough) never dream. Hence all varieties in spelling, devices to turn the vulgar to the genteel by the mere change of a letter*: hence the De's and the Fitz's, by which good common

* It is a pity that the hero of Mr. Lamb's excellent farce, 'Mr. H.' did not possess a little of this sort of ingenuity. I am convinced that the addition or omission of a few letters, or even the transposition, the making an anagram of the word, or some such quip or quidity, would have converted 'Hog's-flesh,' into a very respectable appellation. Did not Miss Hannah K., for instance, make herself at once genteel and happy by merely striking out the first letter and the last—vile useless aspirates? And did not Martha D. become a fashionable lady at a stroke by one bold *erratum* 'for Martha read Matilda' in the first leaf of that domestic Register, the family Bible? There is nothing so ingenious

English is transmogrified into bad French, to be mispronounced by the ignorant and laughed at by the wise,—the deserved and inevitable fate of pretension, ridiculous in every thing, and most of all in cottage names.

under the sun as your genuine name-coiner! A forger by profession is less dexterous, a coat-of-arms maker less imaginative. It is the very triumph of invention.

WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

THE SHAW.

SEPT. 9th.—A bright sunshiny afternoon. What a comfort it is to get out again—to see once more that rarity of rarities, a fine day! We English people are accused of talking over much of the weather; but the weather, this summer, has forced people to talk of it. Summer! did I say? Oh! season most unworthy of that sweet, sunny name! Season of coldness and cloudiness, of gloom and rain! A worse November!—for in November the days are short; and shut up in a warm room, lighted by that household sun, a lamp, one feels through the long evenings comfortably independent of the out-of-door tempests. But though we may have, and did have, fires all through the dog-days, there is no shutting out day-light; and sixteen hours of rain, pattering against the windows and dripping from the eaves—sixteen hours of rain, not merely au-

dible but visible, for seven days in the week—would be enough to exhaust the patience of Job or Grizzel; especially if Job were a farmer, and Grizzel a country gentlewoman. Never was known such a season! Hay swimming, cattle drowning, fruit rotting, corn spoiling! and that naughty river, the Loddon, who never can take Puff's advice, and "keep between its banks," running about the country, fields, roads, gardens and houses, like mad! The weather would be talked of. Indeed, it was not easy to talk of any thing else. A friend of mine having occasion to write me a letter, thought it worth abusing in rhyme, and bepommelled it through three pages of Bath-Guide verse; of which I subjoin a specimen:—

"Aquarius surely *reigns* over the world,
And of late he his water-pot strangely has twirled;
Or he's taken a cullender up by mistake,
And unceasingly dips it in some mighty lake;
Though it is not in Lethe—for who can forget
The annoyance of getting most thoroughly wet?
It must be in the river called Styx, I declare,
For the moment it drizzles it makes the men swear.
'It did rain to-morrow,' is growing good grammar;
Vauxhall and camp-stools have been brought to the hammer;
A pony-gondola is all I can keep,
And I use my umbrella and pattens in sleep:
Row out of my window, whene'er 'tis my whim
To visit a friend, and just ask, 'Can you swim?'"

So far my friend *. In short, whether in prose or in verse, every body railed at the weather. But this is over now. The sun has come to dry the world; mud is turned into dust; rivers have retreated to their proper limits; farmers have left off grumbling; and we are about to take a walk, as usual, as far as the Shaw, a pretty wood about a mile off. But one of our companions being a stranger to the gentle reader, we must do him the honour of an introduction.

Dogs, when they are sure of having their own way, have sometimes ways as odd as those of the unfurred unfeathered animals, who walk on two legs, and talk,

* This friend of mine is a person of great quickness and talent, who, if she were not a beauty and a woman of fortune—that is to say, if she were prompted by either of those two powerful *stimuli*, want of money or want of admiration, to take due pains,—would inevitably become a clever writer. As it is, her notes and *jeux d'esprit*, struck off *à trait de plume*, have great point and neatness. Take the following billet, which formed the label to a closed basket, containing the ponderous present alluded to, last Michaelmas Day :—

“ To Miss M.

‘ When this you see

Remember me,’

Was long a phrase in use;

And so I send

To you, dear friend,

My proxy. ‘ What ?’ A goose !”

and are called rational. My beautiful white greyhound, Mayflower *, for instance, is as whimsical as the finest lady in the land. Amongst her other fancies, she has taken a violent affection for a most hideous stray dog, who made his appearance here about six months ago, and contrived to pick up a living in the village, one can hardly tell how. Now appealing to the charity of old Rachael Strong, the laundress—a dog-lover by profession; now winning a meal from the light-footed and open-hearted lasses at the Rose; now standing on his hind-legs, to extort by sheer beggary a scanty morsel from some pair of “drouthy cronies,” or solitary drover, discussing his dinner or supper on the alehouse-bench; now catching a mouthful, flung to him in pure contempt by some scornful gentleman of the shoulder-knot, mounted on his throne, the coach-box, whose notice he had attracted by dint of ugliness; now sharing the commons of Master Keep the shoemaker’s pigs; now succeeding to the reversion of the well-gnawed bone of Master Brown the shopkeeper’s fierce hound-dog; now filching the skim-milk of Dame Wheeler’s cat:—spit at by the cat; worried by the mastiff; chased by the pigs; screamed at by the dame; stormed at by the shoemaker; flogged by the shopkeeper; teased by all the children, and scouted by all the animals of the

* Dead, alas, since this was written!

parish;—but yet living through his griefs, and bearing them patiently, “for sufferance is the badge of all his tribe;”—and even seeming to find, in an occasional full meal, or a gleam of sunshine, or a whisp of dry straw on which to repose his sorry carcase, some comfort in his disconsolate condition.

In this plight was he found by May, the most high-blooded and aristocratic of Greyhounds; and from this plight did May rescue him;—invited him into her territory, the stable; resisted all attempts to turn him out; reinstated him there, in spite of maid and boy, and mistress, and master; wore out every body's opposition, by the activity of her protection, and the pertinacity of her self-will; made him sharer of her bed and of her mess; and, finally, established him as one of the family as firmly as herself:

Dash—for he has even won himself a name amongst us, before he was anonymous—Dash is a sort of a kind of a spaniel; at least there is in his mongrel composition some sign of that beautiful race. Besides his ugliness, which is of the worst sort—that is to say, the shabbiest—he has a limp on one leg that gives a peculiarly one-sided awkwardness to his gait; but independently of his great merit in being May's pet, he has other merits which serve to account for that phenomenon—being, beyond all comparison, the most faithful, attached, and affectionate animal that I have

ever known; and that is saying much. He seems to think it necessary to atone for his ugliness by extra good conduct, and does so dance on his lame leg, and so wag his scrubby tail, that it does any one who has a taste for happiness good to look at him—so that he may now be said to stand on his own footing. We are all rather ashamed of him when strangers come in the way, and think it necessary to explain that he is May's pet; but amongst ourselves, and those who are used to his appearance, he has reached the point of favouritism in his own person. I have, in common with wiser women, the feminine weakness of loving whatever loves me—and therefore, I like Dash. His master has found out that he is a capital finder, and in spite of his lameness will hunt a field or beat a cover with any spaniel in England—and, therefore, *he* likes Dash. The boy has fought a battle, in defence of his beauty, with another boy, bigger than himself, and beat his opponent most handsomely—and, therefore, *he* likes Dash; and the maids like him, or pretend to like him, because we do—as is the fashion of that pliant and imitative class. And now Dash and May follow us every where, and are going with us to the Shaw, as I said before—or rather to the cottage by the Shaw, to bespeak milk and butter of our little dairy-woman, Hannah Bint—a housewifely occupation, to which we owe some of our pleasantest rambles.

And now we pass the sunny, dusty village street—who would have thought, a month ago, that we should complain of sun and dust again!—and turn the corner where the two great oaks hang so beautifully over the clear deep pond, mixing their cool green shadows with the bright blue sky, and the white clouds that flit over it; and loiter at the wheeler's shop, always picturesque, with its tools, and its work, and its materials, all so various in form, and so harmonious in colour; and its noisy, merry workmen, hammering and singing, and making a various harmony also. The shop is rather empty to day, for its usual inmates are busy on the green beyond the pond—one set building a cart, another painting a waggon. And then we leave the village quite behind, and proceed slowly up the cool, quiet lane, between tall hedge-rows of the darkest verdure, overshadowing banks green and fresh as an emerald.

Not so quick as I expected, though—for they are shooting here to day, as Dash and I have both discovered: he with great delight, for a gun to him is as a trumpet to a war-horse; I with no less annoyance, for I don't think that a partridge itself, barring the accident of being killed, can be more startled than I at that abominable explosion. Dash has certainly better blood in his veins than any one would guess to look at him. He even shews some inclination to elope into the

fields, in pursuit of those noisy iniquities. But he is an orderly person after all, and a word has checked him.

Ah! here is a shriller din mingling with the small artillery—a shriller and more continuous. We are not yet arrived within sight of Master Weston's cottage, snugly hidden behind a clump of elms; but we are in full hearing of Dame Weston's tongue, raised as usual to scolding-pitch. The Westons are new arrivals in our neighbourhood, and the first thing heard of them was a complaint from the wife to our magistrate of her husband's beating her: it was a regular charge of assault—an information in full form. A most piteous case did Dame Weston make of it, softening her voice for the nonce into a shrill tremulous whine, and exciting the mingled pity and anger—pity towards herself, anger towards her husband—of the whole female world, pitiful and indignant as the female world is wont to be on such occasions. Every woman in the parish railed at Master Weston; and poor Master Weston was summoned to attend the bench on the ensuing Saturday, and answer the charge; and such was the clamour abroad and at home, that the unlucky culprit, terrified at the sound of a warrant and a constable, ran away, and was not heard of for a fortnight.

At the end of that time he was discovered, and brought to the bench; and Dame Weston again told her

story, and, as before, on the full cry. She had no witnesses, and the bruises of which she made complaint had disappeared, and there were no women present to make common cause with the sex. Still, however, the general feeling was against Master Weston; and it would have gone hard with him when he was called in, if a most unexpected witness had not risen up in his favour. His wife had brought in her arms a little girl about eighteen months old, partly perhaps to move compassion in her favour; for a woman with a child in her arms is always an object that excites kind feelings. The little girl had looked shy and frightened, and had been as quiet as a lamb during her mother's examination; but she no sooner saw her father, from whom she had been a fortnight separated, than she clapped her hands, and laughed, and cried, "Daddy! daddy!" and sprang into his arms, and hung round his neck, and covered him with kisses—again shouting, "Daddy, come home! daddy! daddy!"—and finally nestled her little head in his bosom, with a fullness of contentment, an assurance of tenderness and protection such as no wife-beating tyrant ever did inspire, or ever could inspire, since the days of King Solomon. Our magistrates acted in the very spirit of the Jewish monarch: they accepted the evidence of nature, and dismissed the complaint. And subsequent events have fully justified their decision; Mistress Weston proving

not only renowned for the feminine accomplishment of scolding (tongue-banging, it is called in our parts, a compound word which deserves to be Greek), but is actually herself addicted to administering the conjugal discipline, the infliction of which she was pleased to impute to her luckless husband.

Now we cross the stile, and walk up the fields to the Shaw. How beautifully green this pasture looks! and how finely the evening sun glances between the boles of that clump of trees, beech, and ash, and aspen! and how sweet the hedge-rows are with woodbine and wild scabious, or, as the country people call it, the gipsy-rose! Here is little Dolly Weston, the unconscious witness, with cheeks as red as a real rose, tottering up the path to meet her father. And here is the carrotty-poll'd urchin, George Coper, returning from work, and singing "Home! sweet Home!" at the top of his voice; and then, when the notes prove too high for him, continuing the air in a whistle, until he has turned the impassable corner; then taking up again the song and the words, "Home! sweet Home!" and looking as if he felt their full import, ploughboy though he be. And so he does; for he is one of a large, an honest, a kind, and an industrious family, where all goes well, and where the poor ploughboy is sure of finding cheerful faces and coarse comforts—all that he has learned to desire. Oh, to be as cheaply and as thoroughly con-

tented as George Coper! All his luxuries, a cricket-match!—all his wants satisfied in “home! sweet home!”

Nothing but noises to-day! They are clearing Farmer Brooke's great bean-field, and crying the “Harvest Home!” in a chorus, before which all other sounds—the song, the scolding, the gunnery—fade away, and become faint echoes. A pleasant noise is that! though, for one's ears' sake, one makes some haste to get away from it. And here, in happy time, is that pretty wood, the Shaw, with its broad path-way, its tangled dingles, its nuts and its honeysuckles;—and, carrying away a faggot of those sweetest flowers, we reach Hannah Bint's: of whom, and of whose doings we shall say more another time.

NOTE.—Poor Dash is also dead. We did not keep him long, indeed I believe that he died of the transition from starvation to good feed, as dangerous to a dog's stomach and to most stomachs, as the less agreeable change from good feed to starvation. He has been succeeded in place and favour by another Dash, not less amiable in demeanour and far more creditable in appearance, bearing no small resemblance to the pet spaniel of my friend Master Dinely, he who stole the bone from the magpies, and who figures as the first Dash of this volume. Let not the unwary reader

opine, that in assigning the same name to three several individuals, I am acting as an humble imitator of the inimitable writer who has given immortality to the Peppers and the Mustards, on the one hand ; or shewing a poverty of invention or a want of acquaintance with the bead-roll of canine appellations on the other. I merely with my usual scrupulous fidelity take the names as I find them. The fact is that half the handsome spaniels in England are called Dash, just as half the tall footmen are called Thomas. The name belongs to the species. Sitting in an open carriage one day last summer at the door of a farm-house where my father had some business, I saw a noble and beautiful animal of this kind lying in great state and laziness on the steps, and felt an immediate desire to make acquaintance with him. My father, who had had the same fancy, had patted him and called him "poor fellow" in passing, without eliciting the smallest notice in return. "Dash!" cried I at a venture, "good Dash! noble Dash!" and up he started in a moment, making but one spring from the door into the gig. Of course I was right in my guess. The gentleman's name was Dash.

LITTLE MISS WREN.

OF all the seasons for marriages that I have ever known, this wet, dirty, snowy, frosty winter, (of 1829) with its hot fits and its cold fits, and its fogs that were neither hot nor cold, but a happy mixture of all the evils of both—chilly as sleet, stifling as steam ;—of all seasons, this, which having murderously slaughtered two hundred head of fine geraniums, my property, I set down as fatal ;—of all the seasons that I remember, this has been the most fertile in marriages. Half the belles in our neighbourhood have disappeared,—not whisked away by fraud or force, as Lovelace carried off Clarissa, but decorously wooed and won, as Sir Charles Grandison wedded Miss Byron. Still they are gone. On Monday a rich member of Parliament drives away to Paris with one county beauty ; on Tuesday a dashing Captain of Hussars sets out for Florence with another ; on Wednesday a third glides quietly away to a country

parsonage with her handsome bridegroom, a young clergyman. Balls and concerts are spangled with silver favours; white gloves are your only present; the pretty nuptial cards knotted together with satin ribbon, fly about like so many doves; and bride-cake is in such abundance, that even the little boys and girls at home for the holidays, chartered gluttons as they are, cry "Hold, enough!"

There is no end to the shapes in which matrimony meets you. Miss A.'s servant comes to you wanting a place—her mistress is going to be married! Mr. B's. hunters are on sale—their master is going to be married! The dress-maker won't undertake to make a new gown under a fortnight—Lady C. is going to be married! The Grove is taken by a Mr. D., of whom nobody knows any thing—except that he is going to be married! Nay, marriages jostle: my worthy friend the Rector of Ashley, a most popular person at all times, and certainly the favourite marrier of the county, was wanted to tie the hymeneal knot the same morning by two couples who live forty miles apart; and Sir Edward E's wedding has been delayed for a fortnight, because that grand minister to the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious" bridals, the coachmaker, was going to be married himself!

Nothing but wedding parties are heard of hereabouts; not to be engaged to two or three would be a sad loss

of caste and of consequence. I, for my own part, have been invited by half a dozen young ladies to see them exchange their freedom "for a name and for a ring," and am just returned from the most magnificent espousals that have been celebrated even in this season of wedlock.

One of the most distinguished and remarkable persons in these parts, not very fruitful of celebrated personages, is undoubtedly my fair friend Miss Philippa Wren, of Wrensnest in this county,—a lady well-known through the neighbourhood, not merely because she is an heiress of good family, and heiresses of any sort are rarities every where, nor because she is amiable and accomplished, as the newspapers say of heiresses and of young ladies in general; but for a quality proper and peculiar to her own individual person,—that quality in short, which has procured for her the universal cognomen of little Miss Wren.

Partly, no doubt, this distinguishing characteristic may have belonged to her by inheritance. The Wrens have been a tiny race from generation to generation, gradually diminishing in size and stature, tapering away like the point of a pyramid, until they reached the very climax of smallness in the person of their fair descendant, the least woman, not to be quite a dwarf, that ever was seen out of Lilliput.

When born it was such a fairy that nurses, doctors,

aunts and grandmamas, almost lost the fear of rearing in the perplexity of dressing it, flung away the superb baby-linen in despair, and were fain to wrap the young stranger in cotton, until the apparel of a neighbouring doll could be borrowed for its service. All the gossips gazed, marvelled, and admired, and as time wore on, and the little lady of the manor grew older, without, as it seemed, growing bigger, the admiration encreased. Every epoch of infancy was a fresh theme of village wonder. Walking and talking assumed, in her case, the form of miracles; and that such an atom should cut teeth seemed little less incredible than that Richard should be born with them. All through her childhood, the tiny heiress passed, with every stranger that saw her, for a rare specimen of precocious talent, was my-deared, petted, fondled and noticed at eighteen, and might now at five and twenty, sink at least fifteen years of her age with perfect impunity, in any company in Europe.

Such a deception, however, is the farthest thing possible from her desire. She would rather, if one of the two evils must be endured, look fifteen years older. Shrewd, quick-witted, keen and capable on all other points, the peculiarity of her person has in this, as in many other instances, influenced her character and her destiny. The sole object of her ambition, "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself," is to be great

(I use the word in the purely primitive sense, large, big, and tall) in despite of nature. Even that ambitious fowl, a she-bantam, does not imitate more absurdly the magnificent demeanour of a Poland hen, than poor Miss Wren emulates the superb and dignified graces of her next neighbour, Miss Stork, a grenadier of a woman, who labours under the converse misfortune to that which has befallen herself, and stands six feet without her shoes. Never was erectness so exemplary and unrelaxing. A poker seems to poke when compared with her perpendicularity. Governesses and dancing-masters reversed, in her case, their usual lectures, complained of her inflexible uprightness, and scolded her for holding up her head. She constantly perches herself on the highest chair in the room, and stands, walks, and dances, on tiptoe,—a process, which, like most attempts to seem what we are not, only serves to make her calamity the more remarkable.

In her dress she practises the same manœuvres with the same ill success; wears very high bonnets with very high plumes; piles as many flowers upon her head as might serve to deck a may-pole; has heels to her boots, false bottoms to her slippers; and punctually follows, in the rest of her equipment the fashion of her above-mentioned neighbour, Miss Stork, the ultimate object of her ambition. Frills, collars, flounces and trimmings of all sorts are made exactly after

her pattern, deducting no inch of fulness or atom of width ; so that, the fair model Miss Stork herself being by no means sparing of adornments, her poor little imitator looks like a mere bundle of finery, an abridgment of the reigning fashion, and makes pretty much such a figure as a well-sized puppet might exhibit, if dressed in an extempore suit of woman's clothes cut shorter for the occasion. Remonstrance is quite out of the question. Even the omnipotent dictum of a French milliner, and the oily flattery of a lady's maid have been tried in vain on Miss Wren. She turned off her shoemaker for unpalatable praise of her little foot, for which, indeed, the famous "glass slipper" of the Fairy Tales would hardly have been small enough ; and cashiered a conscientious mantua-maker for offering to deduct a sovereign in the price of a satin cloak in consideration of its shortness. What worse could she have done had the lady of the needle been wholly honest, and deducted two sovereigns, as well she might, from the seven-guinea cloak ? I do think she would have brought an action for libel.

She inhabits large houses ; sits on great chairs ; rides high horses ; has a Newfoundland dog for a pet ; and drives a huge heavy landau, where she is perched between a tall footman and a fat coachman, and looks, when one catches sight of her, something like a minnow between a salmon and a turbot, or a goldfinch be-

tween a peacock and a goose. The bigger the thing, the more she affects it: plays on the organ, although the chords are as unreachable to her delicate fingers, as Gulliver found those of his instrument at Brobdignag; paints at an easel so high that she is forced to stand on steps; and professes to read comfortably from no book smaller than a folio, though it is morally certain that she must walk backwards and forwards to compass the page. The slender jessamine hand, written with a crowquill on pink note paper, which some fine ladies cultivate so successfully, is her aversion, her letters are substantial specimens of stationery, written in a huge text hand on thick extra-post paper, and sealed with a coat of arms as big as a crown piece,—which magnificent seal, by the way, depending by a chain that might lock a waggon-wheel, from a watch of her maternal grandfather's, as big as a saucer, she constantly wears about her person.

In flowers her taste is of equal magnitude. Dahlias, sunflowers, hollyhocks, and tree-roses, together with the whole tribe of *majors* (*minors*, of course she avoids and detests,) and all those shrubs and creepers whose blossoms are out of reach, are her favourites. She will dangle a bush of rhododendron or azalea in her hand, and wear a magnolia in her bosom for a nosegay. In her love of space, her desire for “ample room and verge enough,” she has done her best to convert her

pretty place of Wrensnest into a second edition of Timon's Villa "*Her pond an ocean, her parterre a down,*" and in her passion for great effects would think no more of moving an oak of a century old from its native forest than I should of transplanting a daisy. Cloud-capt mountains, inaccessible rocks, and the immeasurable ocean, are the only prospects for her; she raves of the stupendous scenery of America, and will certainly some day or other make a journey of pleasure to the Andes or the Cordilleras.

As in nature, so in art, the grand is her standard of excellence. Colossal statues, and pictures larger than life she delights in; worships Martin, adores Michael Angelo, prefers St. Peter's to the Parthenon, and the Farnese Hercules to the Apollo Belvidere. When she dies, she will desire a pyramid for her mausoleum. The dome of St. Paul's, which served her celebrated namesake, would hardly satisfy her ambition.—But why do I talk of tombs and of namesakes? Am I not just come from the wedding breakfast? and is not "Little Miss Wren" Miss Wren no longer? Even whilst I write, bells are ringing, horses prancing, bride-maids simpering, and wedding-cake travelling nine times through the Baroness Blankenhause's fairy ring.

The bridegroom is a fair well-conditioned Saxon, six feet three inches high, and broad in proportion, with a superb genealogical tree, quarterings innumera-

ble, and an estate by no means suitable to his dimensions: for the rest, remarkable for nothing except his great turn for silence*, the number of segars which he puffs away in the course of the day, and two little Marlborough spaniels which he is accustomed to carry about in his coat pockets. I hope he won't put his wife there. Really the temptation will be strong; but the Baron is a giant of grace, a well-mannered monster; and to judge from the carefulness and delicacy with which he lifted his fair bride over a puddle in the

* Persons of the larger size are often very silent. An ingenious friend of mine holds a theory that the desirable quantity of animal spirits is originally distributed pretty equally amongst men; but that it is lost, absorbed, and diluted in people of unusual bulk, and only shines forth in full vigour in those of a smaller frame: as the glass of alcohol, which will powerfully impregnate a pint of water, will be scarcely perceived in a gallon. For instance, (waiving particular examples of which he brought many,) he holds that a company of light infantry would prove far more vivacious than a troop of life-guards; and has no hesitation in asserting that the famous tall regiment of Frederick the Great must have been the dullest part of the whole Prussian army. I do not answer for the truth of his assertion, though my friend makes out a very good case, as your clever theorist seldom fails to do, right or wrong. Indeed I brought Falstaff as a case in point against him. He admitted the mere bulk, the "huge rotundity" and the quantity of animal spirits that distinguished the witty knight, "but then," added he, "I am sure he was short."

church-yard, to save her white satin shoes (she protesting all the time against such a display of his gallantry, and declaring that she could have stept over the pool had it been twice as wide),—to judge from that coup d'essai in husbandship, I see no cause to doubt that he will treat my friend as tenderly and gingerly, as if he were a little girl of six years old, and the fair Philippa his first wax doll.

WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

HANNAH BINT.

THE Shaw, leading to Hannah Bint's habitation, is, as I perhaps have said before, a very pretty mixture of wood and coppice; that is to say, a track of thirty or forty acres covered with fine growing timber—ash, and oak, and elm—very regularly planted; and interspersed here and there with large patches of underwood, hazel, maple, birch, holly, and hawthorn, woven into almost impenetrable thickets by long wreaths of the bramble, the briony, and the briar-rose, or by the pliant and twisting garlands of the wild honey-suckle. In other parts, the Shaw is quite clear of its bosky undergrowth, and clothed only with large beds of feathery fern, or carpets of flowers, primroses, orchises, cowslips, ground-ivy, crane's bill, cotton-grass, Solomon's seal, and forget-me-not, crowded together with a profusion and brilliancy of colour, such as I have rarely seen equalled

even in a garden. Here the wild hyacinth really enamels the ground with its fresh and lovely purple ; there,

“ On aged roots, with bright green mosses clad,
Dwells the wood-sorrel, with its bright thin leaves
Heart-shaped and triply folded, and its root
Creeping like beaded coral ; whilst around
Flourish the copse’s pride, anemones,
With rays like golden studs on ivory laid
Most delicate ; but touched with purple clouds,
Fit crown for April’s fair but changeful brow.”

The variety is much greater than I have enumerated ; for the ground is so unequal, now swelling in gentle ascents, now dimpling into dells and hollows, and the soil so different in different parts, that the sylvan Flora is unusually extensive and complete.

The season is, however, now too late for this floweriness ; and except the tufted woodbines, which have continued in bloom during the whole of this lovely autumn, and some lingering garlands of the purple wild-veitch, wreathing round the thickets, and uniting with the ruddy leaves of the bramble, and the pale festoons of the briony, there is little to call one’s attention from the grander beauties of the trees—the sycamore, its broad leaves already spotted—the oak, heavy with acorns—and the delicate shining rind of the weeping birch, “ the lady of the woods,” thrown out in strong relief from a back-ground of holly and hawthorn, each

studded with coral berries, and backed with old beeches, beginning to assume the rich, tawny hue which makes them perhaps the most picturesque of autumnal trees, as the transparent freshness of their young foliage is undoubtedly the choicest ornament of the forest in spring.

A sudden turn round one of these magnificent beeches brings us to the boundary of the Shaw, and leaning upon a rude gate, we look over an open space of about ten acres of ground, still more varied and broken than that which we have passed, and surrounded on all sides by thick woodland. As a piece of colour, nothing can be well finer. The ruddy glow of the heath-flower, contrasting, on the one hand, with the golden-blossomed furze—on the other, with a patch of buck-wheat, of which the bloom is not past, although the grain be ripening, the beautiful buck-wheat, whose transparent leaves and stalks are so brightly tinged with vermilion, while the delicate pink-white of the flower, a paler persicaria, has a feathery fall, at once so rich and so graceful, and a fresh and reviving odour, like that of birch trees in the dew of a May evening. The bank that surmounts this attempt at cultivation is crowned with the late fox-glove and the stately mullein; the pasture of which so great a part of the waste consists, looks as green as an emerald; a clear pond, with the bright sky reflected in it, lets light into the picture :

the white cottage of the keeper peeps from the opposite coppice ; and the vine-covered dwelling of Hannah Bint rises from amidst the pretty garden, which lies bathed in the sunshine around it.

The living and moving accessories are all in keeping with the cheerfulness and repose of the landscape. Hannah's cow grazing quietly beside the keeper's pony : a brace of fat pointer puppies holding amicable intercourse with a litter of young pigs ; ducks, geese, cocks, hens, and chickens scattered over the turf ; Hannah herself sallying forth from the cottage-door, with her milk-bucket in her hand, and her little brother following with the milking-stool.

My friend, Hannah Bint, is by no means an ordinary person. Her father, Jack Bint, (for in all his life he never arrived at the dignity of being called John, indeed in our parts, he was commonly known by the cognomen of London Jack,) was a drover of high repute in his profession. No man, between Salisbury Plain and Smithfield, was thought to conduct a flock of sheep so skilfully through all the difficulties of lanes and commons, streets and high-roads, as Jack Bint, aided by Jack Bint's famous dog, Watch ; for Watch's rough, honest face, black, with a little white about the muzzle, and one white ear, was as well known at fairs and markets, as his master's equally honest and weather-beaten visage. Lucky was the dealer that could secure their

services; Watch being renowned for keeping a flock together better than any shepherd's dog on the road—Jack, for delivering them more punctually, and in better condition. No man had a more thorough knowledge of the proper night stations, where good feed might be procured for his charge, and good liquor for Watch and himself; Watch, like other sheep dogs, being accustomed to live chiefly on bread and beer. His master, although not averse to a pot of good double X, preferred gin; and they who plod slowly along, through wet and weary ways, in frost and in fog, have undoubtedly a stronger temptation to indulge in that cordial and reviving stimulus, than we water-drinkers, sitting in warm and comfortable rooms, can readily imagine. For certain, our drover could never resist the gentle seduction of the gin-bottle, and being of a free, merry, jovial temperament, one of those persons commonly called good fellows, who like to see others happy in the same way with themselves, he was apt to circulate it at his own expense, to the great improvement of his popularity, and the great detriment of his finances.

All this did vastly well whilst his earnings continued proportionate to his spendings, and the little family at home were comfortably supported by his industry: but when a rheumatic fever came on, one hard winter, and finally settled in his limbs, reducing the most active and

hardy man in the parish to the state of a confirmed cripple, then his reckless improvidence stared him in the face ; and poor Jack, a thoughtless, but kind creature, and a most affectionate father, looked at his three motherless children with the acute misery of a parent, who has brought those whom he loves best in the world, to abject destitution. He found help, where he probably least expected it, in the sense and spirit of his young daughter, a girl of twelve years old.

Hannah was the eldest of the family, and had, ever since her mother's death, which event had occurred two or three years before, been accustomed to take the direction of their domestic concerns, to manage her two brothers, to feed the pigs and the poultry, and to keep house during the almost constant absence of her father. She was a quick, clever lass, of a high spirit, a firm temper, some pride, and a horror of accepting parochial relief, which is every day becoming rarer amongst the peasantry ; but which forms the surest safe-guard to the sturdy independence of the English character. Our little damsel possessed this quality in perfection ; and when her father talked of giving up their comfortable cottage, and removing to the workhouse, whilst she and her brothers must go to service, Hannah formed a bold resolution, and, without disturbing the sick man by any participation of her hopes and fears, proceeded

after settling their trifling affairs to act at once on her own plans and designs.

Careless of the future as the poor drover had seemed, he had yet kept clear of debt, and by subscribing constantly to a benefit club, had secured a pittance that might at least assist in supporting him during the long years of sickness and helplessness to which he was doomed to look forward. This his daughter knew. She knew, also, that the employer in whose service his health had suffered so severely, was a rich and liberal cattle-dealer in the neighbourhood, who would willingly aid an old and faithful servant, and had, indeed, come forward with offers of money. To assistance from such a quarter Hannah saw no objection. Farmer Oakley and the parish were quite distinct things. Of him, accordingly, she asked, not money, but something much more in his own way—"a cow! any cow! old or lame, or what not, so that it were a cow! she would be bound to keep it well; if she did not, he might take it back again. She even hoped to pay for it by and by, by instalments, but that she would not promise!" and partly amused, partly interested by the child's earnestness, the wealthy yeoman gave her, not as a purchase, but as a present, a very fine young Alderney. She then went to the Lord of the manor, and, with equal knowledge of character, begged his permission to keep

her cow on the Shaw common. "Farmer Oakley had given her a fine Alderney, and she would be bound to pay the rent, and keep her father off the parish, if he would only let it graze on the waste;" and he, too, half from real good nature—half, not to be outdone in liberality by his tenant, not only granted the requested permission, but reduced the rent so much, that the produce of the vine seldom fails to satisfy their kind landlord.

Now, Hannah shewed great judgment in setting up as a dairy-woman. She could not have chosen an occupation more completely unoccupied, or more loudly called for. One of the most provoking of the petty difficulties which beset people with a small establishment, in this neighbourhood, is the trouble, almost the impossibility, of procuring the pastoral luxuries of milk, eggs, and butter, which rank, unfortunately, amongst the indispensable necessities of housekeeping. To your thorough-bred Londoner, who, whilst grumbling over his own breakfast, is apt to fancy that thick cream, and fresh butter, and new laid eggs, grow, so to say, in the country—form an actual part of its natural produce—it may be some comfort to learn, that in this great grazing district, however the calves and the farmers may be the better for cows, nobody else is; that farmer's wives have ceased to keep poultry; and that we unlucky villagers sit down often to our first meal

in a state of destitution, which may well make him content with his thin milk and his Cambridge butter, when compared to our imputed pastoralities.

Hannah's Alderney restored us to one rural privilege. Never was so cleanly a little milk-maid. She changed away some of the cottage finery, which, in his prosperous days, poor Jack had pleased himself with bringing home; the China tea-service, the gilded mugs, and the painted waiters, for the more useful utensils of the dairy, and speedily established a regular and gainful trade in milk, eggs, butter, honey and poultry—for poultry they had always kept.

Her domestic management prospered equally. Her father, who retained the perfect use of his hands, began a manufacture of mats and baskets, which he constructed with great nicety and adroitness; the eldest boy, a sharp and clever lad, cut for him his rushes and ozers; erected under his sister's direction, a shed for the cow, and enlarged and cultivated the garden (always with the good leave of her kind patron the lord of the manor) until it became so ample, that the produce not only kept the pig, and half kept the family, but afforded another branch of merchandize to the indefatigable directress of the establishment. For the younger boy, less quick and active, Hannah contrived to obtain an admission to the charity-school, where he made great progress—retaining him at home, however, in the hay-

making, and leasing season, or whenever his services could be made available, to the great annoyance of the schoolmaster, whose favourite he is, and who piques himself so much on George's scholarship (your heavy sluggish boy at country work often turns out quick at his book), that it is the general opinion that this much-vaunted pupil will, in process of time, be promoted to the post of assistant, and may, possibly, in course of years, rise to the dignity of a parish pedagogue in his own person; so that his sister, although still making him useful at odd times, now considers George as pretty well off her hands, whilst his elder brother, Tom, could take an under-gardener's place directly, if he were not too important at home to be spared even for a day.

In short, during the five years that she has ruled at the Shaw cottage, the world has gone well with Hannah Bint. Her cow, her calves, her pigs, her bees, her poultry, have each, in their several ways, thriven and prospered. She has even brought Watch to like buttermilk, as well as strong beer, and has nearly persuaded her father (to whose wants and wishes she is most anxiously attentive) to accept of milk as a substitute for gin. Not but Hannah hath had her enemies as well as her betters. Why should she not? The old woman at the lodge, who always piqued herself on being spiteful, and crying down new ways, foretold from the first she would come to no good, and could not for-

give her for falsifying her prediction ; and Betty Barnes, the slatternly widow of a tippling farmer, who rented a field, and set up a cow herself, and was universally discarded for insufferable dirt, said all that the wit of an envious woman could devise against Hannah and her Alderney ; nay, even Ned Miles, the keeper, her next neighbour, who had, whilome held entire sway over the Shaw common, as well as its coppices, grumbled as much as so good-natured and genial a person could grumble, when he found a little girl sharing his dominion, a cow grazing beside his pony, and vulgar cocks and hens hovering around the buck-wheat destined to feed his noble pheasants. Nobody that had been accustomed to see that paragon of keepers, so tall and manly, and pleasant looking, with his merry eye, and his knowing smile, striding gaily along, in his green coat, and his gold laced hat, with Neptune, his noble Newfoundland dog, (a retriever is the sporting word), and his beautiful spaniel Flirt at his heels, could conceive how askew he looked, when he first found Hannah and Watch holding equal reign over his old territory, the Shaw common.

Yes ! Hannah hath had her enemies ; but they are passing away. The old woman at the lodge is dead, poor creature ; and Betty Barnes, having herself taken to tippling, has lost the few friends she once possessed, and looks, luckless wretch, as if she would soon die,

too!—and the keeper?—why, he is not dead, or like to die; but the change that has taken place there is the most astonishing of all—except, perhaps, the change in Hannah herself.

Few damsels of twelve years old, generally a very pretty age, were less pretty than Hannah Bint. Short and stunted in her figure, thin in face, sharp in feature, with a muddled complexion, wild sun-burnt hair, and eyes, whose very brightness had in them something startling, over-informed, super-subtle, too clever for her age,—at twelve years old she had quite the air of a little old fairy. Now, at seventeen, matters are mended. Her complexion has cleared: her countenance has developed itself; her figure has shot up into height and lightness, and a sort of rustic grace; her bright, acute eye is softened and sweetened by the womanly wish to please; her hair is trimmed, and curled and brushed, with exquisite neatness; and her whole dress arranged with that nice attention to the becoming, the suitable both in form and texture, which would be called the highest degree of coquetry, if it did not deserve the better name of propriety. Never was such a transmogrification beheld. The lass is really pretty, and Ned Miles has discovered that she is so. There he stands, the rogue, close at her side, (for he hath joined her whilst we have been telling her little story, and the milking is over!)—there he stands—holding

her milk-pail in one hand, and stroking Watch with the other; whilst she is returning the compliment, by patting Neptune's magnificent head. There they stand, as much like lovers as may be; he smiling, and she blushing—he never looking so handsome, nor she so pretty in all their lives. There they stand, in blessed forgetfulness of all except each other; as happy a couple as ever trod the earth. There they stand, and one would not disturb them for all the milk and butter in Christendom. I should not wonder if they were fixing the wedding day.

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.



THE ROBINS.

“WHAT have you got in your hat, Edward?” said Arthur Maynard to his cousin Edward Stanhope, as they met one day in our village street, near which they both resided; “what can you have there? a bird’s nest?”

“Oh I hope not!” exclaimed Julia Maynard, who was walking with her brother and a younger sister, “taking birds’ nests is cruel.”

“Cruel or not, Miss Julia,” replied Edward, “a bird’s nest it is. Look, Arthur,” continued he, displaying a nest full of poor little unfledged creatures, opening four great mouths as wide as they could gape; “look, they are robins.”

“Robins! robin redbreasts! the household bird! the friend of man!” cried Arthur; “take a robin’s nest! oh, fie, fie!”

"The robin redbreast," said little Sophy Maynard, "that when the poor Children in the Wood were starved to death, covered them over with leaves. Did you never hear old nurse Andrews repeat the old ballad? I can almost say it myself:—

"No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast painfully
Did cover them with leaves,"—

shouted Sophy: "you that pretend to be so fond of poetry, to take a robin's nest."

"Poetry!" rejoined Edward, contemptuously, "a penny ballad! an old woman's song! call that poetry!"

"I like to hear it though," persisted little Sophy; "I had rather hear nurse Andrews repeat the Children in the Wood, than any thing; call it what names you like."

"And it was but the other day," said Julia, "that papa made me learn some verses just to the same effect out of Mr. Lamb's Specimens. Did you ever hear them?

Call to the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with flowers and leaves do cover,
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Now I am quite sure that these lines are poetry ; and, at all events, every body holds the robin sacred for his social qualities, he is so tame, so confiding, so familiar ; no one would ever think of taking his nest, even if bird's-nesting were not the cruelest thing in the world," continued Julia, returning to her first exclamation, " Every body cherishes the robin."

" So do I," replied her incorrigible cousin ; " I am so fond of the Robin and his note that I mean to bring up all four of these young ones, and tame them, and make friends of them."

" Put back the nest, and I will teach you a better way," said Arthur ; " for we mean to tame some robins ourselves this summer."

" Put back the nest indeed !" rejoined Edward ; " I must make haste home, and get the butler to give me a cage, and Fanny to help me to feed them. Put back the nest indeed !" and off ran the naughty taker of birds' nests, vainly pursued by little Sophy's chidings, by Julia's persuasions, by Arthur's remonstrances, and by the united predictions of all three that he would never rear the unfortunate younglings.

Very true were these predictions. One by one, in spite of all the care of Edward and his sister Fanny, who crammed them twenty times a day with all sorts of food, proper or improper, bread, meat, eggs, herbs, and insects, with every mess, in short, that they had

ever heard recommended for any bird ; one by one the poor little shivering creatures, shivering although wrapt in lamb's-wool and swan's-down, pined, and dwindled, and died ; and Fanny, a kind-hearted little girl, fretted and cried ; and Edward, not less vexed, but too proud to cry, grumbled at his ill-luck, and declared that he would never trouble himself with birds again as long as he lived. " I wonder how Arthur has succeeded with his !" thought he to himself ; " I think he and the girls talked of getting some—but of course, they all died. I am sure no people could take more pains than Fanny and I. I'll never trouble myself with birds again."

About two months after this soliloquy, the young Stanhopes received an invitation to dine with their cousins, for it was Sophy's birthday, and the children had a half-holiday ; and after dinner they were allowed to eat their cherries and strawberries in their own verandah, a place they were all very fond of. And a very pretty place this verandah was.

Fancy a deep shaded trellis running along one end of the house, covered with vines, passion-flowers, clematis, and jessamine, looking over gay flower-beds, the children's own flower-beds, to an arbour of honeysuckle, laburnum, and china-roses, which Arthur had made for Julia ; clusters of greenhouse plants, their own pet geraniums, arranged round the pillars of the veran-

dah ; and the verandah itself, furnished with their own tables and chairs, and littered with their toys and their small garden tools ; as pretty an out-of-door playroom as heart could desire.

It was a fine sunny afternoon towards the end of June, and the young folks enjoyed the fruits and the flowers, and the sweet scent of the bean blossoms and the new-mown hay in the neighbouring fields, and were as happy as happy could be. At last, after the girls had pointed out their richest geraniums and largest heartsease, and they had been properly praised and admired, Arthur said, " I think it is time to show Edward our robins." And at the word, little Sophy began strewing bread crumbs at one end of the verandah as fast as her hands could go.

" Bobby ! Bobby ! pretty Bobby !" cried Sophy ! and immediately the prettiest robin that ever was seen came flying out of the arbour towards her ; not in a direct line, but zigzag as it were, stopping first at a rose tree, then swinging on the top of a lily, then perching on the branch of a campanula that bent under him—still coming nearer and nearer, and listening, and turning up his pretty head as Sophy continued to cry, " Bobby ! Bobby !" and sometimes bowing his body, and jerking his tail in token of pleased acknowledgment, until at last he alighted on the ground, and began picking up the bread crumbs with which it was strewed. Whilst

presently two or three young robins with their speckled breasts (for the red feathers do not appear until they are three or four months old) came fluttering about the verandah, flying in and out quite close to the children, hopping round them, and feeding at their very feet; not shy at all, not even cautious like the old birds, who had seen more of the world, and looked at the strangers with their bright piercing eyes rather mistrustfully, as if they knew, that there were such things as little boys who take birds' nests, and little girls who keep birds in cages.

"Bobby! pretty Bobby!" continued Sophy, quite enchanted at the good conduct of her pets, and calling upon her cousins for their tribute of admiration. Fanny willingly expressed her delight; and Edward looking somewhat foolish, wondered how they became so tame.

"We used to throw down the crumbs from breakfast and dinner in this place all the winter," said Julia; "the poor birds are so glad of them in the hard weather! And one particular robin used to come for them every day, and grew quite familiar; he would even wait here for us, and fly to meet us as soon as that quick eye of his spied a white frock turning the corner. So then we began to talk to him, and to feed him regularly."

"I always saved a great bit of my bread for Bobby," interrupted Sophy.

"And he grew as tame as you see; and when he had young ones, he brought them here with him," resumed her sister.

"You should have seen them the first day," said Sophy; "that was the prettiest sight. The little things did not know how to help themselves, so there they stood about, some on the geraniums and some on the rose trees, chirping, and opening their bills for the old ones to feed them; and the poor old birds flew about from one to the other with bread crumbs, not taking a morsel themselves. You cannot think how much the young ones ate! There was one great greedy fellow perched on my rake, who made his poor papa bring him seven mouthfuls before he was satisfied. And now they are so saucy! see how saucy they are!" continued the little girl as one of the boldest came close to her, and caught a crumb which she was flinging to him before it reached the ground, "see how saucy! O pretty, pretty Bobbies! I do love them so."

"We all like the poor confiding creatures who pay us the compliment of trusting so entirely in our kindness and good faith, I believe," said Arthur, half laughing at her eagerness; "and after all, Edward," added he, as the two boys, bat in hand, marched off to cricket, "after all, you must confess that our method of taming robins is better than yours, and that

one bird who comes to you at liberty, of his own free will, is worth a dozen kidnapped in the nest, luckless wretches, and mewed up in a cage."

Edward confessed that his cousin was right, and never took a bird's nest again.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

THE GENERAL AND HIS LADY.

ALL persons of a certain standing in life, remember—for certainly nothing was ever more unforgettable—the great scarlet fever of England, when volunteering was the order of the day; when you could scarcely meet with a man who was not under some denomination or other, a soldier; when a civil topic could hardly find a listener; when little boys played at reviewing, and young ladies learned the sword exercise. It was a fine ebullition of national feeling—of loyalty and of public spirit, and cannot be looked back to without respect; but, at the moment, the strange contrasts—the perpetual discrepancies—and the comical self-importance which it produced and exhibited, were infinitely diverting. I was a very little girl at the time; but even now I cannot recollect without laughing, the appearance of a cornet of yeomanry cavalry, who might have played Falstaff without stuffing, and was obliged

to complete his military decorations by wearing (and how he contrived to keep up the slippery girdle, one can hardly imagine) three silken sashes sewed into one! To this day, too, I remember the chuckling delight with which a worthy linen-draper of my acquaintance heard himself addressed as Captain, whilst measuring a yard of ribbon; pretending to make light of the appellation, but evidently as proud of his title as a newly dubbed knight, or a peer of the last edition; and I never shall forget the astonishment with which I beheld a field-officer, in his double epaulettes, advance obsequiously to the carriage-door, to receive an order for five shillings worth of stationery! The prevailing spirit fell in exactly with the national character,—loyal, patriotic, sturdy and independent; very proud, and a little vain; fond of excitement, and not indifferent to personal distinction; the whole population borne along by one laudable and powerful impulse, and yet each man preserving, in the midst of that great leveller, military discipline, his individual peculiarities and blameless self-importance. It was a most amusing era!

In large country towns, especially where they mustered two or three different corps, and the powerful stimulant of emulation was super-added to the original martial fury, the goings on of these Captain Pattypans furnished a standing comedy, particularly when aided by the solemn etiquette and strong military spirit of

their wives, who took precedence according to the rank of their husbands, from the colonel's lady down to the corporal's, and were as complete martialists, as proud of the services of their respective regiments, and as much impressed with the importance of field-days and reviews, as if they had actually mounted the cockade and handled the firelock in their own proper persons. Foote's inimitable farce was more than realised; and the ridicules of that period have only escaped being perpetuated in a new 'Mayor of Garrat,' by the circumstance of the whole world, dramatists and all, being involved in them. "The lunacy was so ordinary, that the whippers were in *arms* too."

That day is past. Even the yeomanry cavalry, the last lingering remnant of the volunteer system, whom I have been accustomed to see annually parade through the town of B., with my pleasant friend Captain M. at their head,—that respectable body, of which the band always appeared to me so much more numerous than the corps,—even that respectable body is dissolved; whilst the latest rag of the infantry service—the long preserved uniform and cocked hat of my old acquaintance, Dr. R., whilome physician to the B. Association, figured last summer as a scarecrow, stuffed with straw, and perched on a gate, an old gun tucked under its arm, to frighten the sparrows from his cherry-orchard! Except the real soldiers, and every now and then some

dozen of fox-hunters at a hunt-ball (whose usual dress-uniform, by the way, scarlet over black, makes them look just like a flight of ladybirds), excepting these gallant sportsmen, and the real *bona fide* officers, one cannot now see a red coat for love or money. The glory of the volunteers is departed!

In the mean time I owe to them one of the pleasantest recollections of my early life.

It was towards the beginning of the last war, when the novelty and freshness of the volunteering spirit had somewhat subsided, and the government was beginning to organize a more regular defensive force, under the name of local militia, that our old friend Colonel Sanford was appointed, with the rank of brigadier general, to the command of the district in which we resided. Ever since I could recollect, I had known Colonel Sanford—indeed a little brother of mine, who died at the age of six months, had had the honour to be his godson; and from my earliest remembrance, the good Colonel—fie upon me to forget his brigadiership!—the good General had been set down by myself, as well as by the rest of the world, for a confirmed old bachelor. His visits to our house had, indeed, been only occasional, since he had been almost constantly on active service, in different quarters of the globe; so that we had merely caught a sight of him as he passed from the East Indies to the West, or in his still more rapid tran-

sit, from Gibraltar to Canada. For full a dozen years however (and further the recollection of a young lady of sixteen could hardly be expected to extend), he had seemed to be a gentleman very considerably on the wrong side of fifty,—“or by'r Lady inclining to threescore,”—and that will constitute an old bachelor, in the eyes of any young lady in Christendom.

His appearance was not calculated to diminish that impression. In his person, General Sanford was tall, thin, and erect; as stiff and perpendicular as a ramrod! with a bald head, most exactly powdered; a military queue; a grave formal countenance; and a complexion, partly tanned and partly frozen, by frequent exposure to the vicissitudes of different climates, into one universal and uniform tint of reddish brown or brownish red.

His disposition was in good keeping with this solemn exterior,—grave and saturnine. He entered little into ladies' conversation, with whom, indeed, he seldom came much in contact; and for whose intellect he was apt to profess a slight shade of contempt,—an unhappy trick, to which your solemn wiseacre is sometimes addicted. All men, I fear, entertain the opinion; but the clever ones discreetly keep it to themselves. With other gentlemen he did hold grave converse, on politics, the weather, the state of the roads, the news of the day, and other gentlemanly topics; and when much at

ease in his company, he would favour them with a few prosing stories, civil and military. One, in particular was of formidable length. I have seen a friend of his wince as he began, "When I was in Antigua."—For the rest, the good General was an admirable person; a gentleman, by birth, education, and character; a man of the highest honour, the firmest principles, and the purest benevolence. He was an excellent officer, also, of the old school; one who had seen much service; was a rigid disciplinarian, and somewhat of a Martinet. Just the man to bring the new levies into order, although not unlikely to look with considerable scorn on the holiday soldiers, who had never seen any thing more nearly resembling a battle, than a sham fight at a review.

He paid us a visit, of course, when he came to be installed into his new office, and to take a house at B. his destined head-quarters; and after the first hearty congratulations on his promotion, his old friend, a joker by profession, began rallying him, as usual, on the necessity of taking a wife; on which, instead of returning his customary grave negative, the General stammered, looked foolish, and, incredible as it may seem that a blush could be seen through such a complexion, actually blushed; and when left alone with his host, after dinner, in lieu of the much dreaded words, "When I was in Antigua!" seriously requested his advice on

the subject of matrimony : which that sage counsellor, certain that a marriage was settled, and not quite sure that it had not already taken place, immediately gave, in the most satisfactory manner ; and before the conversation was finished, was invited to attend the wedding on the succeeding Thursday.

The next time that we saw the General, he was accompanied by a lovely little girl, whom he introduced as his wife, but who might readily have passed for his granddaughter. I wanted a month of sixteen ; and I was then, and am now, perfectly convinced, that Mrs. Sanford was my junior. The fair bride had been a ward of the bridegroom's—the orphan, and I believe, destitute daughter of a brother officer. He had placed her, many years back, at a respectable country boarding-school, where she remained, until his new appointment, and, as he was pleased to say, his friends' suggestions induced him to resolve upon matrimony, and look about for a wife, as a necessary appendage to his official situation.

It is probable that his wife's exceeding beauty might have had something to do with his resolution as well as with his choice. I have never seen a lovelier creature. Her figure was small, round, and girlish ; full of grace and symmetry. Her face had a child-like purity and brilliancy of colouring ; an alternation of blush and smile, a sweetness and innocence of expression, such as might

beseem a Hebe—only still more youthful than the goddess of youth. Her manners were exactly those of a child come home for the holidays,—shy and bashful, and shrinking from strangers; playful and affectionate with those whom she loved, especially her husband, who doated on her, and of whom she was very fond,—and shewing, in the midst of her timidity and childishness, considerable acuteness and power of observation.

At first she seemed, as well she might be, quite bewildered by the number of persons who came to visit her. For living in a large town, and holding, in right of her husband's office, a station of no small importance in the county, every person, of the slightest gentility in the town and neighbourhood, the whole visiting population of these, in general, very distinct and separate societies, thought proper to wait upon Mrs. Sanford. Mrs. Sanford was the fashion of B., and of B. shire. "Not to know her, argued yourself unknown." All the town and all the county called, and all the town invited her to tea, and all the county requested her company to dinner: and she, puzzled, perplexed, and amazed, hardly knowing by sight one individual of her innumerable acquaintance; unable to distinguish between one person and another; often forgetting titles; never remembering names; and ignorant as an infant of artificial distinctions, made twenty blunders in an hour; and kept the poor General, as punctilious an observer

of the duties of society as of the duties of the service, in a perpetual state of fidget and alarm. Her mistakes were past all count,—she mislaid invitations ; forgot engagements ; mismatched her company ; gave the mayor of B. the precedence of the county member ; and hath been heard to ask an old bachelor after his wife, and an old maid after her children. There was no end to Mrs. Sanford's blunders. The old Brigade-Major, a veteran of the General's own standing, lame of a leg, and with a prodigious scar across his forehead, was kept on the constant stump with explanatory messages and conciliatory embassies,—and declared, that he underwent much harder duty in that service, than ever he had performed in his official capacity of drilling the awkward squad. The General, not content with dispatching his *aide-de-camp*, exhausted himself in elaborate apologies, but embassies, apologies and explanations were all unnecessary. Nobody could be angry with Mrs. Sanford. There was no resisting the charm of her blushing youthfulness ; her pleading voice ; her ready confession of error, and her evident sorrow for all her little sins, whether of ignorance or heedlessness ; no withstanding her sweetness and simplicity. Even offended self-love, the hardest to appease of all the passions, yielded to the artlessness of Mrs. Sanford.

She, on her part, liked nothing so well as to steal away from her troublesome popularity, her visitors, and

her fine clothes, to the ease and freedom of the country ; to put on a white frock and a straw-bonnet, and run about the woods and fields with some young female friend, primrosing or birds'-nesting, according to the season. I was her usual companion in these rambles, and enjoyed them, perhaps, as much as she did ; but in a far quieter way. Her animal spirits seemed inexhaustible ; I never knew her weary ; and strong, agile, and entirely devoid of bodily fear, the thought of danger never seemed to come across her. How she enjoyed spending a long day at our house ! now bounding over a ditch, to gather a tuft of wild flowers ; now climbing a pollard, to look for a bird's nest ; now driving through the lanes in a donkey-chaise ; now galloping across the common on a pony ; now feeding the chickens ; now milking the cows ; now weeding the gravel walks ; now making hay ; and now reaping. These were her delights ! All her pleasures were equally childish : she cherished abundance of pets, such as school-girls love ; kept silk-worms, dor-mice, and canary birds ; a parrot, a squirrel, and a monkey ; three lap-dogs, and a Persian cat ; enjoyed a fair, and was enchanted with a pantomime ; always supposing that her party did not consist of fine people or of strangers, but was composed of those to whom she was accustomed, and who were as well disposed to merriment and good-humour as herself.

With regard to accomplishments, she knew what was commonly taught in a country school above twenty years ago, and nothing more : played a little, sang a little, talked a little indifferent French ; painted shells and roses, not particularly like nature, on card-racks and hand-screens ; danced admirably ; and was the best player at battledore and shuttlecock, hunt-the-slipper, and blind-man's-buff in the county. Nothing could exceed the glee with which, in any family where she was intimate, she would join the children in a game of romps, herself the gayest and happiest child of the party.

For cards she had no genius. Even the noise and nonsense of a round-table, could not reconcile her to those bits of painted pasteboard ; this was unlucky : it is true that the General, who played a good rubber, and looked upon it, next to a review, or a battle, as the most serious business of life, and who had moreover a settled opinion that no woman had intellect enough to master the game, would hardly have wished to have been her partner at the whist-table ; but he also loved a snug party at piquet, just to keep him awake after dinner, and would have liked exceedingly that Mrs. Sanford should have known enough of the rules to become a decent antagonist. He was not unreasonable in his expectations, he did not desire that she should play well enough to win. He only wanted her to un-

derstand sufficient of the game to lose in a creditable manner. But it would not do : she was unconquerably stupid ; never dealt the right number of cards ; never shewed her point ; was ignorant even of the common terms of the art ; did not know a quart from a quint, or a pique from a repique ; could not tell when she was capotted. There was no comfort in beating her ; so the poor General was fain to accept his old Brigade-Major as a substitute, who gave him three points and beat him.

In other respects, she was an excellent wife ; gentle, affectionate, and sweet tempered. She accommodated herself admirably to all the General's ways ; listened to his admonitions with deference, and to his stories with attention—the formidable one, beginning, “ when I was in Antigua,” not excepted ; was kind to the old Brigade-Major ; and when he, a confirmed old bachelor, joined his patron in certain dissertations on the natural inferiority of the sex, heard them patiently, and if she smiled, took good care they should not find her out.

To be sure, her carelessness did occasionally get her husband into a scrape. Once, for instance, he, being inspecting certain corps twenty miles off, she undertook to bring his dress clothes, for the purpose of attending a ball given in his honour, and forgot his new inexpressibles, thereby putting the poor General to the trouble and expense of sending an express after

the missing garment, and keeping him a close prisoner till midnight, in expectation of the return of his messenger. Another time, he being in London, and the trusty Major also absent, she was commissioned to inform him of the day fixed for a grand review; sat down for the purpose; wrote a long letter full of chit-chat—and he could not abide long letters; never mentioned military affairs; and on being reminded of her omission, crammed the important intelligence into a crossed postscript under the seal, which the General, with his best spectacles, could not have decyphered in a month! so that the unlucky commander never made his appearance on the ground, and but for a forty years' reputation for exactness and punctuality, which made any excuse look like truth, would have fallen into sad disgrace at head-quarters.

In process of time, however, even these little errors ceased. She grew tall, and her mind developed itself with her person; still lively, ardent and mercurial in her temperament, with an untiring spirit of life and motion, and a passionate love of novelty and gaiety, her playfulness ripened into intelligence, her curiosity became rational, and her delight in the country, deepened into an intense feeling of the beauties of nature. Thrown amidst a large and varying circle, she became, in every laudable sense of the phrase, a perfect woman of the world. Before a change in the volunteer system,

and a well-merited promotion took the General from B., she had learned to manage her town visits and her country visits, to arrange *soirées* and dinner parties, to give balls, and to plan picnics, and was the life and charm of the neighbourhood. I would not even be sure that she had not learned piquet; for lovely as she was, and many as there were to tell her that she was lovely, her husband was always her first object; and her whole conduct seemed guided by the spirit of that beautiful line in the most beautiful of ballads:

For auld Robin Gray's been a gude man to me.

Since his death—for she has been long a widow—Lady Sanford—have I not said that the good General became Sir Thomas before his decease!—has lived mostly on the Continent: indulging, but always with the highest reputation, her strong taste for what is gayest in artificial life and grandest in natural scenery. I have heard of her sometimes amongst the brilliant crowds of the Roman carnival, sometimes amidst the wildest recesses of the Pyrenees; now looking down the crater of Vesuvius; now waltzing at a court ball at Vienna. She has made a trip to Athens, and has talked of attempting the ascent of Mont Blanc! At present she is in England; for a friend of mine saw her the other day at the Cowes regatta, full of life and glee, almost as pretty as ever, and quite as delightful.

Of course, being also a well-dowered and childless widow, she has had lovers by the hundred, and offers by the score; but she always says that she has made up her mind not to marry again, and I have no doubt of her keeping her resolution. She loves her liberty too dearly to part with the blessing; and well as she got on with Sir Thomas, I think she has had enough of matrimony. Besides, she has now reached a sedate age, and there would be a want of discretion, which hitherto she never has wanted, in venturing——

“What was that you said, ma’am? The newspaper! Have I read the newspaper?—People will always talk to me when I am writing!—Have I read to-day’s paper? No; what do you wish me to look at? This column: Police reports—new publications—births?—oh, the marriages! ‘Yesterday, at Bow Church, Mr. Smith to Miss Brown.’ Not that? Oh! the next!—‘On Friday last, at Cheltenham, by the Venerable the Archdeacon P——, Dennis O’Brien, Esq., of the —th regiment.’—But what do I care for Dennis O’Brien, Esq.? ‘What’s Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?’ I never heard of the gentleman before in my days. Oh! it’s the lady; ‘Dennis O’Brien, Esq. to Lady Sanford’—‘Angels and ministers of grace defend us!’ here is a surprise!—‘to lady Sanford!’ Ay, my eyes did not deceive me, its no mistake; ‘relict of the late Major-General Sir Thomas Sanford, K. C. B.’ And so much

for a widow's resolution! and a gay widow's too! I would not have answered for one of the demure. A General's widow at the ripe age of forty (oh, age of indiscretion!) married to an ensign in a marching regiment; young enough to be her son, I warrant me; and as poor as a church mouse! If her old husband could but know what was going forward, he would chuckle in his grave, at so notable a proof of the weakness of the sex—so irresistible a confirmation of his theory. Lady Sanford married again! Who, after this, shall put faith in woman? Lady Sanford married again!

GOING TO THE RACES.

A MEMORABLE day was the third of last June to Mary and Henrietta Coxe, the young daughters of Simon Coxe the carpenter of Aberleigh for it was the first day of Ascot Races, and the first time of their going to that celebrated union of sport and fashion. There is no pleasure so great in the eyes of our country damsels as a jaunt to Ascot. In the first place, it is when you get there, a genuine English amusement, open alike to rich and poor, elegant as an opera, and merry as a fair ; in the second, this village of Aberleigh is situate about fourteen miles from the course, just within distance, almost out of distance, so that there is commonly enough of suspense and difficulty—the slight difficulty, the short suspense, which add such zest to pleasure ; finally, at Ascot you are sure to see the King, to see him in his graciousness and his dignity, the finest gentleman in Europe, the greatest sovereign

of the world. Truly it is nothing extraordinary that his liege subjects should flock to indulge their feelings of loyalty by the sight of such a monarch, and that the announcement of his presence should cover a barren heath with a dense and crowded population of all ranks and all ages, from the duchess to the gipsy, from the old man of eighty to the child in its mother's arms.

All people love Ascot Races ; but our country lasses love them above all. It is their favourite wedding jaunt, for half our young couples are married in the race week, and one or two matches have seemed to me got up purposely for the occasion ; and of all the attentions that can be offered by a lover, a drive to the Races is the most irresistible. In short, so congenial is that gay scene to love, that it is a moot point which are most numerous, the courtships that conclude there in the shape of bridal excursions, or those which begin on that favoured spot in the shape of parties of pleasure ; and the delicate experiment called "popping the question," is so often put in practice on the very course itself, that when Robert Hewitt, the young farmer at the Holt, asked Master Coxe's permission to escort his daughters, not only the good carpenter, but his neighbours the blacksmith and the shoemaker, looked on this mark of rustic gallantry as the precursor of a declaration in form ; and all the village cried out on Hetta Coxe's extreme good luck, Hetta being sup-

posed, and with some reason, to be the chief object of this attention.

Robert Hewitt was a young farmer of the old school, honest, frugal, and industrious; thrifty, thriving, and likely to thrive; one of a fine yeomanly spirit, not ashamed of his station, and fond of following the habits of his forefathers, sowing his own corn, driving his own team, and occasionally ploughing his own land. As proud, perhaps, of his blunt speech and homely ways as some of his brother farmers of their superior refinement and gentility. Nothing could exceed the scorn with which Robert Hewitt, in his market cart, drawn by his good horse Dobbin, would look down on one neighbour on his hunter, and another in his gig. To the full as proud as any of them was Robert, but in a different way, and perhaps a safer. He piqued himself, like a good Englishman, on wearing a smock frock, smoking his pipe, and hating foreigners, to our intercourse with whom he was wont to ascribe all the airs and graces the new fashions, and the effeminaoy, which annoyed him in his own countrymen. He hated the French, he detested dandies, and he abhorred fine ladies, fine ways, and finery of any sort. Such was Robert Hewitt.

Henrietta Coxe was a pretty girl of seventeen, and had passed the greater part of her life with an aunt in the next town, who had been a lady's maid in her youth, and had retired thither on a small annuity. To this

aunt, who had been dead about a twelvemonth, she was indebted for a name, rather too fine for common wear—I believe she wrote herself Henrietta-Matilda; a large wardrobe, pretty much in the same predicament; an abundant stock of superfine notions, some skill in mantua-making and millinery, and a legacy of a hundred pounds to be paid on her wedding-day. Her beauty was quite in the style of a wax doll: blue eyes, flaxen hair, delicate features, and a pink and white complexion, much resembling that sweet pea which is known by the name of the painted lady. Very pretty she was certainly, with all her airs and graces; and very pretty, in spite of her airs and graces, did Robert Hewitt think her; and love, who delights in contrasts, and has an especial pleasure in oversetting wise resolutions, and bending the haughty self-will of the lords of the creation, was beginning to make strange havoc in the stout yeoman's heart. His operations, too, found a very unintentional coadjutrix in old Mrs. Hewitt, who, taking alarm at her son's frequent visits to the carpenter's shop, unwarily expressed a hope that if her son did intend to marry one of the Coxe's, he would have nothing to do with the fine lady, but would choose Mary, the elder sister, a dark haired, pleasant looking young woman of two-and-twenty, who kept the house as clean as a palace, and was the boast of the village for industry and good humour. Now this unlucky caution gave

Robert, who loved his mother, but did not choose to be managed by her, an additional motive for his lurking preference, by piquing his self-will; add to which, the little damsel herself, in the absence of other admirers, took visible pleasure in his admiration; so that affairs seemed drawing to a crisis, and the party to Ascot appeared likely to end like other jaunts to the same place, in a wedding. It is true that the invitation, which had been readily and gratefully accepted by her sister, had been received by Miss Hetta with some little demur. "Going to the Races was delightful! but to ride in a cart behind Dobbin was odious. Could not Mr. Hewitt hire a phaeton, or borrow a gig? However, as her sister seemed to wish it, she might perhaps go, if she could find no better conveyance." And with this concession the lover was contented; the more especially as the destined finery was in active preparation. Flounces, fur-belows, and frippery of all descriptions, enough to stock a milliner's shop, did Hetta produce for the adornment of her fair person; and Robert looked on in silence, sometimes thinking how pretty she would look; sometimes, how soon he would put an end to such nonsense when once they were married; and sometimes, how odd a figure he and Dobbin should cut by the side of so much beauty and fashion.

Neither Dobbin nor his master were fated to be so ho-

noured. The evening before the Races there happened to be a revel at Whitley Wood : thither Hetta repaired ; and there she had the ill fortune to be introduced to Monsieur Auguste, a young Frenchman, who had lately hired a room at B. where he vended eau de Cologne and French toys and essences, and did himself the honour, as his bills expressed, to cut the hair and the corns of the nobility and gentry of the town and neighbourhood. Monsieur was a dark, sallow, foreign looking personage, with tremendous whiskers, who looked at once fierce and foppish, was curled and perfumed in a manner that did honour to his double profession, and wore gold rings in his ears and on his fingers, a huge bunch of seals at his side, and a gaudy brooch at his bosom. Small chance had Robert Hewitt against such a rival, especially when, smitten with her beauty or her hundred pounds, he devoted himself to Hetta's service, made fine speeches in most bewitching broken English, braved for her sake the barbarities of a country dance, and promised to initiate her into the mysteries of the waltz and the quadrille ; and, finally, requested the honour to conduct her in a cabriolet, the next day to Ascot Races. Small chance had our poor farmer against such a Monsieur.

The morning arrived, gloomy, showery, and cold, and at the appointed hour up drove the punctual Robert, in a new market cart, painted blue with red wheels, and

his heavy but handsome horse Dobbin (who was indeed upon occasion the fore horse of the team), as sleek and shining as good feed and good dressing could make him. Up drove Robert with his little sister (a child of eleven years old, who was to form one of the party) sitting at his side; whilst equally punctual, at Master Coxe's door, stood the sisters ready dressed, Mary in a new dark gown, a handsome shawl, and a pretty straw bonnet, with a cloth cloak hanging on her arm; Hetta in a flutter of gauze and ribbons, pink and green, and yellow and blue, looking like a parrot tulip, or a milliner's doll, or a picture of the fashions in the *Lady's Magazine*, or like any thing under the sun but an English country girl. Robert looked at her and then at Mary, who was vainly endeavouring to persuade her to put on, or at least to take, a cloak, and thought for once without indignation of his mother's advice; he got out, however, and was preparing to assist them into the cart, when suddenly, to the astonishment of every body but Hetta, for she had said nothing at home of her encounter at the revel, Monsieur Auguste made his appearance in a hired gig of the most wretched description, drawn by an equally miserable jade, alighted at the house and claimed Mademoiselle's promise to do him the honour to accompany him in his cabriolet. The consternation was general. Mary remonstrated with her sister mildly but earnestly; Master Coxe swore she should not;

but Hetta was resolute; and farmer Hewitt, whose first impulse had been to drub the Frenchman, changed his purpose when he saw how willing she was to be carried off. "Let her go," said he, "Monsieur is welcome to her company; for my part, I think they are well matched. It would be a pity to part them." And lifting Mary rapidly into the cart, he drove off at a pace of which Dobbin, to judge from his weight, appeared incapable, and to which that illustrious steed was very little accustomed.

In the mean while Hetta was endeavouring to introduce her new beau to her father, and to reconcile him to her change of escort; and the standers by, consisting of half the men and boys in the village, were criticising the Frenchman's equipage: "I could shake the old chaise to pieces with one jerk, it's so ramshackle," cried Ned Jones, Master Cox's foreman. "The wheel will come to pieces long before they get to Ascot," added Sam the apprentice. "The old horse has a spavin in the off fore leg, that's what makes him so lame," said Will Ford the blacksmith. "And he has been down within the month. Look at his knees!" rejoined Jem the carter, "He's blind of an eye," exclaimed one urchin. "He shies," cried another. "The reins are rotten," observed Dick the collarmaker. "The Frenchman can't drive," remarked Jack the drover, coming up to join the crew; "he'd as nearly as possible run

foul of my pigs." "He'll certainly overturn her, poor thing," cried one kind friend, as overcome by her importunities her father at length consented to her departure. "The chaise will break down," said another. "Break! he'll break her neck," added a third. They'll be drenched to the skin in this shower," exclaimed a fourth;—and amidst these consoling predictions the happy couple departed.

Robert and Mary, on their side, proceeded for some time in almost total silence! Robert too angry for speech, and Mary feeling herself, however innocent, involved in the consequences of her sister's delinquency; so that little passed beyond Anne Hewitt's delighted remarks on the beauty of the country, and the hedges, bright with the young leaves of the oak, and gay with the pearly thorn blossoms and the delicate briar rose; and her occasional exclamations at the sudden appearance of some tiny wren, or the peculiar interrupted flight of some water-wagtail, as he threw himself forward, then rested for a moment, self poised in the air, then started on again with an up-and-down motion, like a ball tossed from the hand, keeping by the side of the cart for half a mile or more, as is frequently the way with that sociable bird. Little passed beyond trifles such as these, until Robert turned suddenly round to his companion with the abrupt question: "Pray, Miss Mary, do you like Frenchmen?" "I

never was acquainted with any," replied Mary; "but I think I should like Englishmen best. It seems natural to prefer one's own countrymen." "Aye, to be sure!" replied Robert, "to be sure it is! You are a sensible girl, Mary Coxe; and a good girl. It would be well for your sister if she had some of your sense." "Hetta is good girl, I assure you, Farmer Hewitt; a very good girl," rejoined Mary warmly, "and does not want sense. But only consider how young she is, and her having no mother, and being a little spoilt by my poor aunt, and so pretty, and every body talking nonsense to her, no wonder that she should sometimes be a little wrong, as she was this morning. But I hope that we shall meet her on the course, and that all will go right again. Hetta is a good girl, and will make a good wife." "To a Frenchman," replied Robert dryly; and the conversation turned to other subjects, and was kept up with cheerfulness and good humour till they reached Ascot.

Anne and Mary enjoyed the Races much. They saw the line of carriages, nine deep—more carriages than they thought ever were built; and the people—more people than they thought the whole world could hold; had a confused view of the horses and a distinct one of the riders' jackets; and Anne, whose notions on the subject of racing had been rather puzzled, so far enlarged her knowledge and improved her mind as to

comprehend that yellow, crimson, green, and blue, in short, all the colours of the rainbow, were trying which should come first to the winning post ; they saw punch, a puppet show, several peep shows, and the dancing dogs ; admired the matchless display of beauty and elegance when the weather allowed the ladies to walk up and down the course ; were amused at the bustle and hurry-scurry, when a sudden shower drove them to the shelter of their carriages ; saw the Duke of Wellington ; had a merry nod from the lively boy, Prince George ; and had the honour of sharing, with some thousands of his subjects, a most graceful bow and most gracious smile from his Majesty. In short, they had seen every thing and every body, except Hetta and her beau ; and nothing had been wanting to Mary's gratification, but the assurance of her sister's safety ; for Mary had that prime qualification for a sight-seer, the habit of thinking much of what she came to see and little of herself. She made light of all inconveniences, covered little Anne (a delicate child) with her own cloak during the showers, and contrived, in spite of Robert's gallant attention to his guest, that Anne should have the best place under the umbrella, and the most tempting portion of the provisions ; so that our farmer by no means wanting in moral taste, was charmed with her cheerfulness, her good humour, and the total absence of vanity and selfishness ; and when, on her ascending the cart to re-

turn, he caught a glimpse of a pretty foot and ankle, and saw how much exercise and pleasure had heightened her complexion and brightened her hazel eyes, he could not help thinking to himself, "My mother was right. She's ten times handsomer than her sister, and has twenty times more sense,—and, besides, she does not like Frenchmen."

But where could Hetta be? what had become of poor Hetta? This question, which had pressed so frequently on Mary's mind during the Races, became still more painful as they proceeded on their road home, which, leading through cross country lanes, far away from the general throng of the visitors, left more leisure for her affectionate fears. They had driven about two miles, and Robert was endeavouring to comfort her with hopes that their horse's lameness had forced them back again, and that her sister would be found safe at Aberleigh, when a sudden turn in the lane discovered a disabled gig, without a horse or driver, in the middle of the road, and a woman seated on a bank by the side of a ditch—a miserable object, tattered, dirty, shivering, drenched, and crying as if her heart would break. Was it, could it be Hetta? Yes Hetta it was. All the misfortunes that had been severally predicted at their outset had befallen the unfortunate pair. Before they had travelled three miles, their wretched horse had fallen lame in his near fore leg, and had cast the off hind shoe, which, as

the blacksmith of the place was gone to the Races, and nobody seemed willing to put himself out of the way to oblige a Frenchman, had nearly stopped them at the beginning of their expedition. At last, however, they met with a man who undertook to shoe their steed, and whose want of skill added a prick to their other calamities; then Monsieur Auguste broke a shaft of the cabriolet by driving against a post, the setting and bandaging of which broken limb made another long delay; then came a pelting shower, during which they were forced to stand under a tree; then they lost their way, and owing to the people of whom Monsieur inquired not understanding his English, and Monsieur not understanding theirs, went full five miles round about; then they arrived at the Chequers public house, which no effort could induce their horse to pass, so there they stopped perforce to bait and feed; then, when they were getting on as well as could be expected of a horse with three lame legs and a French driver, a waggon came past them, carried away their wheel, threw Monsieur Auguste into the hedge, and lodged Miss Henrietta in the ditch; so now the beau was gone to the next village for assistance, and the belle was waiting his return on the bank; and Poor Hetta was evidently tired of her fine lover and the manifold misadventures which his unlucky gallantry had brought upon her, and accepted very thankfully the offer which

Anne and Mary made, and Robert did not oppose, of taking her into the cart and leaving a line written in pencil on a leaf of Mary's pocket book, to inform Monsieur of her safety. Heartily glad was poor Hetta to find herself behind the good steed Dobbin, under cover of her sister's warm cloak, pitied and comforted and in a fair way to get home. Heartily glad would she have been, too, to have found herself reinstated in the good graces of her old admirer. But of that she saw no sign. Indeed, the good yeoman took some pains to show that, although he bore no malice, his courtship was over. He goes, however, oftener than ever to the carpenter's house; and the gossips of Aberleigh say that this jaunt to Ascot will have its proper and usual catastrophe, a merry wedding; that Robert Hewitt will be the happy bridegroom, but that Hetta Coxe will not be the bride.

THE CHINA JUG.

ONE of the prettiest rustic dwellings in our pretty neighbourhood, is the picturesque farm-house which stands on the edge of Wokefield Common, so completely in a bottom, that the passengers who traverse the high road see indeed the smoke from the chimneys floating like a vapour over the woody hill which forms the back-ground, but cannot even catch a glimpse of the roof, so high does the turfy common rise above it; whilst so steeply does the ground decline to the door, that it seems as if no animal less accustomed to tread the hill side than a goat or a chamois could venture to descend the narrow footpath which winds round the declivity, and forms the nearest way to the village. The cart-track, thridding the mazes of the hills, leads to the house by a far longer but very beautiful road; the smooth fine turf of the Common varied by large tufts of furze and broom rising in an abrupt bank on one side, on the other a narrow well-timbered valley, bor-

dered by hanging woods, and terminated by a large sheet of water, close beside which stands the farm, a low irregular cottage snugly thatched, and its different out-buildings, all on the smallest scale, but giving the air of comfort and habitation to the spot that nothing can so thoroughly convey as an English barn-yard with its complement of cows, pigs, horses, chickens, and children.

One part of the way thither is singularly beautiful. It is where a bright and sparkling spring has formed itself into a clear pond in a deep broken hollow by the road side : the bank all around covered with rich grass, and descending in unequal terraces to the pool : whilst on every side around it, and at different heights, stand ten or twelve noble elms, casting their green shadows mixed with the light clouds and the blue summer sky on the calm and glassy water, and giving, (especially when the evening sun lights up the little grove, causing the rugged trunks to shine like gold, and the pendent leaves to glitter like the burnished wings of the rose beetle,) a sort of pillared and columnar dignity to the scene.

Seldom too would that fountain, famous for the purity and sweetness of its waters, be without some figure suited to the landscape ; child, woman, or country girl, leaning from the plank extended over the spring, to fill her pitcher, or returning with it, supported by

one arm on her head, recalling all classical and pastoral images, the beautiful sculptures of Greece, the poetry of Homer and of Sophocles, and even more than these, the habits of oriental life, and the Rachels and Rebeccas of Scripture.

Seldom would that spring be without some such figure ascending the turfy steps into the lane, of whom one might enquire respecting the sequestered farmhouse, whose rose-covered porch was seen so prettily from a turn in the road; and often it would be one of the farmer's children who would answer you; for in spite of the vicinity of the great pond, all the water for domestic use was regularly brought from the Elmin Spring.

Wokefield-Pond-Farm was a territory of some thirty acres; one of the "little bargains," as they are called, which once abounded, but are now seldom found, in Berkshire; and at the time to which our story refers, that is to say, about twenty years ago, its inhabitants were amongst the poorest and most industrious people in the country.

George Mearing was the only son of a rich yeoman in the parish, who held this "little bargain" in addition to the manor farm. George was an honest, thoughtless, kind-hearted, good-humoured lad, quite unlike his father, who, shrewd, hard, and money-getting, often regretted his son's deficiency in the qualities by

which he had risen in the world, and reserved all his favour and affection for one who possessed them in full perfection,—his only daughter, Martha. Martha was a dozen years older than her brother, with a large bony figure, a visage far from prepossessing, a harsh voice, and a constitutional scold, which, scrupulous in her cleanliness, and vigilant in her economy, was in full activity all day long. She seemed to go about the house for no other purpose than that of finding fault, maundering now at one, and now at another,—her brother, the carters, the odd boy, the maid,—every one, in short, except her father, who, connecting the ideas of scolding and of good housewifery, thought that he gained or at least saved money by the constant exercise of this accomplishment, and listened to her accordingly with great delight and admiration: “her mother,” thought he to himself, “was a clever managing woman, and sorry enough was I to lose her; but gracious me, she was nothing to Martha! where she spoke one word, Martha speaks ten.”

The rest of the family heard this eternal din with far less complacency. They agreed, indeed, that she could not help scolding, that it was her way, and that they were all fools to take notice of it; but yet they would flee, one and all, before the outpouring of her wrath, like birds before a thunder shower.

The person on whom the storm fell oftenest and

loudest was of course her own immediate subject, the maid ; and of the many damsels who had undergone the discipline of Martha's tongue, none was ever more the object of her objurgation, or deserved it less, than Dinah Moore. But Dinah had many sins in her stern mistress's eyes, which would hardly have been accounted such elsewhere. In the first place she was young and pretty, and to youth and beauty Martha had strong objections ; then she was somewhat addicted to rustic finery, especially in the article of pink top-knots, —and to rosy ribbons Martha had almost as great an aversion as to rosy cheeks ; then again the young lass had a spirit, and when unjustly accused would vindicate herself with more wit than prudence, and better tempered persons than Martha cannot abide that qualification ; moreover the little damsel had an irresistible lightness of heart, and a gaiety of temper, which no rebuke could tame, no severity repress ; laughter was as natural to her, as chiding to her mistress ; all her labours went merrily on : she would sing over the mashing tub, and smile through the washing week, out-singing Martha's scolding, and out-smiling Martha's frowns.

This in itself would have been sufficient cause of offence : but when Martha fancied, and fancied truly, that the pink top-knots, the smiles, and the songs were all aimed at the heart of her brother George, of whom, in her own rough way, she was both fond and proud,

the pretty songstress became insupportable : and when George in despite of her repeated warnings, did actually one fine morning espouse Dinah Moore, causing her in her agitation to let fall an old-fashioned china wash-hand basin, the gift of a long deceased godmother, which, with the jug belonging to it, she valued more than any other of her earthly possessions ; no wonder that she made a vow never to speak to her brother whilst she lived, or that more in resentment than in covetousness (for Martha Mearing was rather a harsh and violent, than an avaricious woman) she encouraged her father in his angry resolution of banishing the culprit from his house, and disinheriting him from his property.

Old Farmer Mearing was not, however, a wicked man, although in many respects, a hard one. He did not turn his son out to starve : on the contrary, he settled him in the Pond Farm, with a decent though scanty plenishing,—put twenty pounds in his pocket, and told him that he had nothing more to expect from him, and that he must make his own way in the world as he had done forty years before.

George's heart would have sunk under this denunciation, for he was of a kind but weak and indolent nature, and wholly accustomed to depend on his father, obey his orders, and rely on him for support ; but he was sustained by the bolder and firmer spirit of his wife

who, strong, active, lively and sanguine, finding herself for the first time in her life, her own mistress, in possession of a comfortable home, and married to the man of her heart, saw nothing but sunshine before them. Dinah had risen in the world, and George had fallen; and this circumstance, in addition to an original difference of temperament, may sufficiently account for their difference of feeling.

During the first year or two, Dinah's prognostics seemed likely to be verified. George ploughed and sowed and reaped, and she made butter, reared poultry and fatted pigs: and their industry prospered, and the world went well with the young couple. But a bad harvest, the death of their best cow, the lameness of their most serviceable horse, and more than all, perhaps the birth of four little girls in four successive years, crippled them sadly, and brought poverty and the fear of poverty to their happy fire-side.

Still, however, Dinah's spirit continued undiminished. Her children, although, to use her own phrase, "of the wrong sort," grew and flourished, as the children of poor people do grow and flourish, one hardly knows how; and by the time that the long-wished-for boy made his appearance in the world, the elder girls had become almost as useful to their father as if they had been "of the right sort" themselves. Never were seen such hardy and handy little elves! They drove the

plough, tended the kine, folded the sheep, fed the pigs, worked in the garden, made the hay, hoed the turnips, reaped the corn, hacked the beans, and drove the market cart to B—— on occasion, and sold the butter, eggs, and poultry as well their mother could have done.

Strong, active, and serviceable as boys were the little lasses; and pretty withal, though as brown as so many gipsies, and as untrained as wild colts. They had their mother's bright and sparkling countenance, and her gay and sunny temper, a heritage more valuable than house or land,—a gift more precious than ever was bestowed on a favoured princess by beneficent fairy. But the mother's darling was one who bore no resemblance to her either in mind or person, her only son and youngest child Moses, so called after his grandfather, in a lurking hope, which was however disappointed, that the name might propitiate the offended and wealthy yeoman.

Little Moses was a fair, mild, quiet boy, who seemed at first sight far fitter to wear petticoats than any one of his madcap sisters; but there was an occasional expression in his deep grey eye that gave token of sense and spirit, and an unfailing steadiness and diligence about the child that promised to vindicate his mother's partiality. She was determined that Moses should be, to use the country phrase, "a good scholar;" the meaning of which is, by the way, not a little dissi-

similar from that which the same words bear at Oxford or at Cambridge. Poor Dinah was no "scholar" herself, as the parish register can testify, where her mark stands below George's signature in the record of her marriage; and the girls bade fair to emulate their mother's ignorance, Dinah having given to each of the four the half of a year's schooling, upon the principle of ride and tie, little Lucy going one day, and little Patty the next, and so on with the succeeding pair; in this way adroitly educating two children for the price of one, their mother in her secret soul holding it for girls a waste of time. But when Moses came in question the case was altered. He was destined to enjoy the benefit of an entire education, and to imbibe unshared all the learning that the parish pedagogue could bestow. An admission to the Wokefield free-school ensured him this advantage, together with the right of wearing the long primitive blue cloth coat and leathern girdle, as well as the blue cap and yellow tassel by which the boys were distinguished; and by the time he was eight years old, he had made such progress in the arts of writing and cyphering, that he was pronounced by the master to be the most promising pupil in the school.

At this period, misfortunes, greater than they had hitherto known, began to crowd around his family. Old Farmer Mearing died, leaving all his property to Martha; and George, a broken-hearted toil-worn man,

who had been only supported in his vain efforts to make head against ill-fortune by the hope of his father's at last relenting, followed him to the grave in less than two months. Debt and difficulty beset the widow, and even her health and spirits began to fail. Her only resource seemed to be to leave her pleasant home, give up every thing to the creditors, get her girls out to service, and try to maintain herself and Moses by washing or charring, or whatever work her failing strength would allow her to perform.

Martha, or as she was now called Mrs. Martha, lived on in lonely and apparently comfortless affluence at the Manor Farm. She had taken no notice of Dinah's humble supplications, sent injudiciously by Patty, a girl whose dark and sparkling beauty exactly resembled what her mother had been before her unfortunate marriage; but on Moses, so like his father, she had been seen to gaze wistfully and tenderly, when the little procession of charity boys passed her on their way to church: though on finding herself observed, or perhaps on detecting herself in such an indulgence, the softened eye was immediately withdrawn, and the stern spirit seemed to gather itself into a resolution only the stronger for its momentary weakness.

Mrs. Martha, now long past the middle of life, and a confirmed old maid, had imbibed a few of the habits and peculiarities which are supposed, and perhaps

justly, to characterise that condition. Amongst other things she had a particular fancy for the water from the Elmin spring, and could not relish her temperate supper if washed down by any other beverage ; and she was accustomed to fetch it herself in the identical china jug, the present of her godmother, the basin belonging to which she had broken from the shock she underwent when hearing of George's wedding. It is even possible, so much are we the creatures of association, that the constant sight of this favourite piece of porcelain, which was really of very curious and beautiful Nankin china, might, by perpetually reminding her of her loss, and the occasion, serve to confirm her inveterate aversion to poor George and his family.

However this might be, it chanced that one summer evening Mrs. Martha sallied forth to fetch the sparkling draught from the Elmin spring. She filled her jug as usual, but much rain had fallen, and the dame, no longer so active as she had been, slipped when about to re-ascend the bank with her burthen, and found herself compelled either to throw herself forward and grasp the trunk of the nearest tree, to the imminent peril of her china jug, of which she was compelled to let go, or to slide back to the already tottering and slippery plank, at the risk, almost the certainty, of plunging head foremost into the water. If Mrs. Martha had been asked, on level ground and out of danger,

whether she preferred to be soused in her own person, or to break her china jug, she would, most undoubtedly, theoretically have chosen the ducking; but theory and practice are different matters, and following the instinct of self-preservation, she let the dear mug go, and clung to the tree.

As soon as she was perfectly safe she began to lament, in her usual vituperative strain, over her irreparable loss, scolding the tottering plank and the slippery bank, and finally, there being no one else to bear the blame, her own heedless haste, which had cost her the commodity she valued most in the world. Swinging herself round, however, still supported by the tree, she had the satisfaction to perceive that the dear jug was not yet either sunken or broken. It rested most precariously on a tuft of bulrushes towards the centre of the pool, in instant danger of both these calamities, and, indeed, appeared to her to be visibly sinking under its own weight. What could she do? She could never reach it; and whilst she went to summon assistance, the precious porcelain would vanish. What could she do?

Just as she was asking herself this question, she had the satisfaction to hear footsteps in the lane. She called; and a small voice was heard singing, and the little man Moses with his satchel at his back, made his appearance, returning from school. He had not heard her,

and she would not call him—not even to preserve her china treasure. Moses, however, saw the dilemma, and pausing only to pull off his coat, plunged into the water, to rescue the sinking cup.

The summer had been wet, and the pool was unusually high, and Mrs. Martha startled to perceive that he was almost immediately beyond his depth, called to him earnestly and vehemently to return. The resolute boy, however, accustomed from infancy to dabble like the young water-fowl amidst the sedges and islets of the great pond, was not to be frightened by the puny waters of the Elmin spring. He reached, though at some peril, the tuft of bulrushes—brought the jug triumphantly to land—washed it—filled it at the fountain-head, and finally offered it, with his own sweet and gracious smile, to Mrs. Martha. And she—oh! what had she not suffered during the last few moments, whilst the poor orphan—her brother George's only boy, was risking his life to preserve for her a paltry bit of earthenware! What had she not felt during those few but long moments! Her woman's heart melted within her; and instead of seizing the precious porcelain, she caught the dripping boy in her arms—half-smothered him with kisses, and vowed that her home should be his home, and her fortune his fortune.

And she kept her word,—she provided amply and kindly for Dinah and her daughters; but Moses is her

heir, and he lives at the Manor Farm, and is married to the prettiest woman in the country ; and Mrs. Martha has betaken herself to the Pond-side, with a temper so much ameliorated, that the good farmer declares the greatest risk his children run is, of being spoilt by aunt Martha :—one in particular, her godson, who has inherited the name and the favour of his father, and is her own especial little Moses.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

TOM HOPKINS.

THEY who knew the little town of Cranley some thirty years ago, must needs remember Tom Hopkins, the loudest, if not the greatest man in the place, and one of the most celebrated sportsmen in that sporting neighbourhood, which he had honoured with his residence for a longer time than he—still in the prime of life, and as tenacious of his pretensions to youth as a fading beauty—cared to hear tell of. Tom, whose family was none of the most illustrious, his ancestors having been from time immemorial grocers in the town, had had the good luck, before he was out of petticoats, to take the fancy of a rich relation, a grand-aunt, who, captivated as grand-aunts are wont to be, by a happy union of prettiness and mischief, rosy cheeks

and naughty tricks, the usual merits of a spoilt child, installed the chubby-faced Pickle into the post of present pet, and future heir,—sent him to school at her own expence, and declared her intention to make a gentleman of him in proper time,—a prospect which, as her hopeful grand-nephew happily conceived the immunities and privileges of gentility to consist of idleness and field-sports, proved sufficiently delightful to reconcile him to the previous formality of learning “small Latin and less Greek,” and bore him safely through the forms, with no worse reputation than that of being the greatest dunce that ever quitted the school. When that happy time arrived, however, there was some difference of opinion as to his destination, Tom having set his heart on one mode of killing, whilst his grand aunt had decided on another. “I will be a soldier,” cried Tom, already enamoured of the art of gunnery. “You shall be an apothecary,” replied aunt Deborah, equally devoted to the draught and the pill. Physic and arms fought a pitched battle, and long and obstinate was the contest; there was even some danger that the dispute might have ended in disinheritance, to the probable benefit of the county hospital, when a discreet friend prudently suggested the possibility of uniting the two modes of putting people out of the world, and Tom consented to don the apron and sleeves and become *un garçon apothicaire*, under promise of flourish-

ing at some future period as an army surgeon—a promise, which though not kept to the letter, was at least so far realized as to make him a surgeon of militia, and obtain for him the enviable privilege of wearing a red coat, and meddling with fire-arms. These delights, however extatic, soon lost their gloss and their novelty; Tom speedily discovered that hunting and shooting were his real vocation; and aunt Deborah happening to die and to leave him a comfortable independence, he retired from the service, after one winter spent in country quarters, returned to his native town, built himself a house, set up an establishment, consisting of a couple of hunters, a brace of pointers, a servant lad, and an old woman, and began to make war on the hares, foxes, pheasants, partridges, and other *feræ naturæ*, under the character of a sportsman, which he filled with eminent ability and success, being universally reckoned one of the boldest riders, and best shots in the county.

At the time of which I speak, he was of an age somewhat equivocal; public fame called him forty, whilst he himself stuck obstinately at thirty-two; of a stout active figure, rather manly than gentlemanly, and a bold jovial visage, in excellent keeping with his person, distinguished by round bright stupid black eyes, an aquiline nose, a knowing smile, and a general comely vulgarity of aspect. His voice was hoarse and deep, his

manner bluff and blunt, and his conversation loud and boisterous. With all these natural impediments to good company, the lowness of his origin recent in their memories, and the flagrant fact of his residence in a country town, staring them in the face, Mr. Tom Hopkins made his way into almost every family of consideration in the neighbourhood. Sportsmanship, sheer sportsmanship, the qualification that, more than any other, commands the respect of your great English landholder, surmounted every obstacle. There was not a man in the * * shire hunt who fenced so well, or went so fast over a country; and every table in the county was open to so eminent a personage.

With the ladies, he made his way by different qualities; in the first place he was a character, an oddity, and the audacity of his vulgarity was tolerated, where a man only half as boisterous would have been scouted; then he was gallant in his way, affected, perhaps felt, a great devotion to the sex, and they were half amused, half pleased, with the rough flattery which seemed, and probably was, so sincere. Then they liked, as all women like, his sturdiness of character, his boldness, his staunchness, and his zeal. He won Lady Frances's heart by canvassing for her husband in a contested election, during which he performed more riding, drinking, and roaring, told more lies and made more noise than any ten of the fee'd agents; he achieved

the Countess's good graces by restoring her fat asthmatic lap-dog to health, appetite, and activity ;—N.B. As Mr. Thomas Hopkins took Chloe home to Cranley to be nursed, it is likely that the Abernethy system may fairly claim the merit of that cure ;—and he even made a favourable impression on a young Marchioness, by riding to London, above seventy miles, in order to match a shade of netting silk, thereby winning a considerable wager against time of the Marquis. In short, Tom Hopkins was so general a favourite with the female world, that, but for three or four flat refusals, consequent on as many very presumptuous offers, he would certainly have fallen into the mistake of thinking he might marry whom he would. As it was, he kept his own counsel, only betraying his soreness by a transient avoidance of ladies' company, and a proneness to descant at the Hunt dinners on the comforts of a single state, and the manifold evils of matrimony.

His house was an ugly brick dwelling of his own erection, situate in the principal street of Cranley, and adorned with a green door and a brass knocker, giving entrance into a stone passage, which, there being no other way to the stable, served both for himself, and that very dear part of himself, his horses, whose dwelling was certainly far more commodious than their master's. His accommodations were simple enough. The dining-parlour, which might pass for his only sit-

ting room,—for the little dark den which he called his drawing-room was not entered three times a year,—the dining-parlour was a small square room, coloured pea-green with a gold moulding, adorned with a series of four prints on shooting, and four on hunting, together with two or three portraits of eminent racers, riders, hunters, and grooms. Guns and fishing-rods were suspended over the mantel-piece; powder-horns, shot-belts, and game bags, scattered about; a choice collection of flies for angling lay in one corner, whips and bridles in another, and a pile of books and papers,—Colonel Thornton's Tour, Daniel's Rural Sports, and a heap of Racing Calendars, occupied a third; Ponto and Carlo lay basking on the hearth rug, and a famous little cocking spaniel, Flora by name, a conscious favourite, was generally stretched in state on an arm-chair.

Here, except when the owner was absent on a sporting expedition, which, between fishing, shooting, hunting, and racing, did, it must be confessed, happen pretty often; here his friends were sure to find a hearty welcome, a good beef-steak (his old housekeeper was famous for cookery!), and as much excellent port and super-excellent Madeira (Tom, like most of his school, eschewed claret and other thin potations) as their host could prevail on them to swallow. Many a good fellow hath "heard the chimes at midnight" in this little

room. Here Tom sate in his glory, telling interminable stories of his own exploits, and those of his dogs and horses; stories in every sense of the word, but yet as innocent as falsehoods well can be—in the first place, because they were always lies of vanity, not lies of malice, and could do harm to no creature upon earth;—in the second, because the orator, being somewhat lengthy and prosy, his hearers were apt to be troubled with “the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking,” and seldom knew what he was talking about. Moreover, having told fibs of this sort all his life, I don’t think he could help it; I don’t even believe that he knew when he did it, or that he could, to save his life, have separated the true from the false, in any one of his legends. He was incurable. It did not even hurt his conscience to be found out.

Such was Tom Hopkins; and such, allowing for the difference of thirty years, Tom Hopkins is still. Some changes are however observable in that gallant sportsman, such changes as thirty years are wont to bring. He sits somewhat heavier in the saddle, and mounts somewhat seldomer,—has well nigh given up fishing and shooting,—has exchanged fox-hunting for coursing,—sold his hunters and purchased a staid roadster,—keeps a brace of greyhounds, of whose pedigree he vaunts much,—belongs to two coursing meetings, and

swears every year that his dog was cheated out of the cup.

This is his winter amusement. In the summer he diverts himself like other idle gentlemen; cons over the Sporting Magazine, and the newspaper of the day; lounges to the inn to see the coaches change horses, and observes to a second whether the Regulator or the Defiance keeps time best; or stands centinel in the garden, firing, from time to time, to keep the sparrows from the cherry trees. On wet days he is often seized with a fancy for mending and altering, and walks about the house, with a hammer sticking out of his pocket, doing no good, or a carpenter at his heels doing harm; sometimes dozes in his easy chair, and sometimes complains of a twinge of the gout. He has nearly given up country visiting, but is a great man at the Cranley Club, where he tells longer stories than ever of the chases, the hounds, and the hunters of his youth; of the great contested election; of matchless belles, now, alas! no more, and lords who have not left their fellow; rails at the degeneracy of the times, the decline of beauty, the increase of dandyism, the adulteration of port wine, and the decrease of good fellowship; gets half tipsy, and finally staggers home, escorted by his maid Dorothy, a rosy-cheeked damsel, of whose handiness and skill in cookery (his old house-keeper having

long been dead,) he boasts almost as much as of the breed of his greyhounds, and whom the President of the Cranley Club has betted with his Vice, "that old Tom Hopkins," (so he irreverently calls him), "with all his talk of Duchesses and Countesses, will marry before the year is out;" and truly I think so too.

LOUISA.

I HAVE said, in talking of my fair friend, Little Miss Wren—the Baroness Blankenhausen, I beg her pardon, how one forgets these new-married ladies' new titles! —I have said that this was a year fruitful in white gloves, silver favors and bridecake; and since that event weddings and tidings of weddings have poured in faster than ever. The last of these conjunctions is to me by far the most astonishing—so astonishing that although assisting at the ceremony I can hardly believe that it has taken place; but am still experiencing the same sort of surprise, that one feels at the death of an invalid of ten years' standing, or the termination of a twenty years' chancery suit.

It was on Monday last that I had the double pleasure of attending the nuptials of an old friend, and of giving in my resignation of the post of confidante, which I had filled with great credit and honour for twenty years and upwards. A married woman no

longer needs the sympathy and consolation of a listening and pitying love-friend. Her story, according to all the laws of romance, is fairly over. So is my occupation. I shall miss it at first, just as one living in a church-yard would miss an entire cessation of those bells, which yet from habit he scarcely heard. I shall miss poor Louisa's sighs and blushes, written or spoken, especially when the post comes in, and she will miss me, perhaps, the most of the two; for I cannot help thinking that by the time the honey-moon is over, the necessity for a discreet confidante may be as pressing as ever. I cannot disguise from myself, that a damsel who has been used to fall in love with a new object at the end of every two or three months for the last twenty years, more or less, may, from mere habit, and without the slightest intentional infraction of the nuptial vow, fairly forget that she is married, and relapse into her old custom; more especially as her husband appears to be the only young man she has ever known with whom she has never even-fancied herself in love.

Louisa L. and myself were old schoolfellows. Her father is a West-Indian planter of some property, who, having lost many children in the pestiferous climate of Barbadoes, did not choose to carry thither his only remaining daughter, and left her at school during a long residence on his estate, not as a parlour-boarder but as a common pupil. She was a fine-looking girl with a

tall showy figure, and a face amazingly like what one sees in those old family portraits, which bear so great a resemblance to each other, whatever they might do to the originals. Like them our heroine was distinguished by regular features, a high narrow forehead, black sleepy eyes, long dark hair, a clear complexion, and a general languishing composure of aspect.

Now this sounds like the description of a beautiful woman as well as of a beautiful picture; and so it would be, only that unluckily, whilst content that the portrait should keep one look and one expression, we are apt to expect the real woman to vary occasionally, and are so unreasonable as to be disappointed when we find her countenance however handsome (for the handsomer it is the more we expect from it) fixed in the same mould of comely silliness from year's end to year's end. In such a case almost any change would be felt as a relief, and a little ugliness would tell exceedingly.

Her conversation was quite in keeping with her style of person; much of the sort (making due allowance for the interval of a century) that one might expect from Sir Peter Lely's portrait of one's great grandmother seated on a bank, attired in a robe of blue satin, with a crook in her hand, a rose in her bosom, and two or three sheep at her feet.

Simile apart, Louisa was a thoroughly well-meaning young woman, with little wit, and much good-nature,

with a mind no more adapted to contain knowledge than a sieve to hold water, and a capacity of unlearning, a faculty of forgetting, most happily suited to the double and triple course of instruction which her father's protracted absence doomed her to undergo. She had been in the first class for five years to my certain knowledge; there I found her and there I left her, going over the same ground with each successive set, and regularly overtaken and outstripped by every girl of common talent. The only thing in which she ever made any real proficiency was music; by dint of incredible application she sang tolerably, played well on the piano, and better on the harp. But she had no genuine love even for that; and began to weary, as well she might, of her incessant practice, and her interminable education. The chief effect of this natural weariness was a strong desire to be married, the only probable mode of release that occurred to her; for of her father's return she and every one had begun to despair. How to carry this wish into effect perplexed her not a little. If she had been blest with a manœuvring mamma, indeed, the business might soon have been done. But poor Louisa was not so lucky. She had only an old bachelor uncle, and two maiden aunts, who, quite content to see to her comforts in a kind, quiet way, to have her at home in the holidays, to keep her well dressed and well supplied with fruit and pocket-money, con-

tinued to think of her as a mere school-girl, and never dreamed of the grand object by which her whole soul was engrossed. So that the gentle damsel, left entirely to the resources of her own genius, could devise no better plan than to fix her own thoughts and attention, fall in love, as she called and perhaps thought it, with every man of suitable station who happened to fall in her way. The number of these successive, or alternate, or simultaneous preferences—for often she had two beaux who were laid aside and taken up in a sort of see-saw, as either happened to cross her path, and sometimes she had literally two at once—was really astonishing. So was her impartiality. Rich or poor, old or young, from seventeen to seventy, nothing came amiss. Equally amazing was the exceedingly small encouragement upon which her fancy could work; to dance with her, to sit next her at dinner, to ask her to play, one visit, one compliment, a look, a word, or half a word, was enough to send her sighing through the house, singing tender airs, and reading novels and love-ditties. The celebrated ballad in which Cowley gives a list of his mistresses—the “Chronicle” as he calls it—was but a type of the bead-roll of names that might have been strung up from her fancies. The common duration of a fit was about a month or six weeks, sometimes more, sometimes less, as one love-wedge drove out another; but generally the ‘decline and fall’

of these attachments (I believe that is the phrase), began at the month's end.

It was astonishing how well these little dramas were gotten up: any body not in the secret would have thought her really a tender innamorata, she had so many pretty sentimentalities, would wear nothing but the favourite's favourite color, or sigh out her soul over his favourite song, or hoard his notes or visiting tickets in her bosom. One of her vagaries cost me a bad cold. The reigning swain happened to be a German count, who, talking somewhat fantastically of the stars, expressed a sort of superstitious devotion to the beautiful constellation 'Orion; he could not sleep he said, till he had gazed on it. Now, our luckless damsel took this for a sort of covert assignation, a tender rendezvous of looks and thoughts, like the famous story of the two lovers in the Spectator; and the sky prospect from her apartment being rather limited, she used to my unspeakable annoyance to come star-gazing to mine. This *accès*, being encouraged by more attention than usual on the part of the gentleman—or rather she being unused to foreign manners, and mistaking the continental courtesy to a fair lady for a particular devotion,—lasted three whole months. Of course she fell into other mistakes besides the general one of fancying all men in love with her. One winter, for instance, she fancied that a sickly gentleman, who used to sun him-

self on the pavement on our side of the square, walked there to listen to her music ; so she obligingly moved her harp close to an open window (in December ! N.B. she caught as bad a cold by these noon-day serenades, as ever her midnight assignations with the belted Orion gave me), and played and sang during the whole time of his promenade. A little while after we discovered that the poor gentleman was deaf.

Nor were her own mistakes, though they were bad enough, the worst she had to encounter. A propensity so ridiculous could not escape undetected amongst such a tribe of tricky and mischievous spirits ; nor could all the real regard attracted by the fair Louisa's many good qualities save her from the mal-practices of these little mockers. It was such fun to set her whirligig heart a-spinning, to give her a fresh object—sometimes a venerable grandfather, sometimes a school-boy brother, sometimes a married cousin—any lover would answer her purpose, and the more absurd or impossible, the better for ours.

I will, however, do myself the justice to say, that partly from compassion, and partly from vanity at being elected to the post of confidante, I was not by many degrees so guilty as many of my compeers. To be sure one Valentine, a piece of original poetry, with about as much sense and meaning as the famous love-song by a person of quality, and a few flowery billets

to match, purporting to come from the same quarter, —that Valentine! I must plead guilty to that Valentine—but that was a venial offence, and besides she never found it out. So when I left school, and even when six months after her father unexpectedly returned and took her to reside with him in a country town, I still continued the favoured depository of her secrets and her sighs.

We lived in distant counties, and met so seldom, that our intercourse was almost entirely epistolary. Intercourse did I say? My share of the correspondence, or of the dialogue, was little better than what a confidante on the French stage sustains with the *belle princesse*, from whom she is obliged to hear a hundred-times-told-tale. I was a mere woman of straw—a thing to direct to. She never cared for answers, luckily for me; for at first whilst my young civility and conscientious sense of the duties of a polite letter-writer instigated me to reply point by point to her epistles, such blunders used to ensue as are sometimes produced in a game of cross purposes—a perpetual jostling of hopes and fears; condolence out of season; congratulation mistimed; praise misapplied; eternal confusion; never-ending mistakes. So, farther than half a dozen unmeaning affectionate words, I left off writing at all, perhaps with the lurking hope that she would follow my example. No such thing. The

vent was necessary—I was the safety-valve to her heart, by which dangerous explosions were prevented. On she wrote—and oh such letters! crossed and re-crossed, and in such a hand! so pretty and so unreadable! Straight and far apart, with long tails meeting each other, and the shorter letters all alike, all m's and n's*. In vain did I remonstrate against this fashionable but barbarous calligraphy, above all against the iniquitous checquer work; on she went from bad to worse, till at last, to my great comfort, her letters became altogether illegible, and my conscience was absolved from the necessity of even trying to read them. A frank made no difference; she went on with her double crossing, only there was double the quantity. Any thing like a regular perusal of these precious epistles was entirely out of the question; and yet I used to get at the meaning of most of them in the process of folding and unfolding, just as one sometimes catches the substance of an unreadable book by the mere act of cutting open the leaves. I knew her so well, that I could trace by a catch-word the progress of her history, and the particular object of her present regard—how she was herself in love with a

* Of all the varieties of bad writing, this, which looks at first sight quite plain, whilst to decypher it would puzzle an Œdipus, is the most provoking.

lord, and how accusing a presumptuous linen-draper of being enamored of her ; how she had a young baronet at her feet, and how she could talk of nothing but an itinerant musician. Twice had she called on me to fulfil an old promise of attending her to the altar ; and once (I was young and silly then myself,) once I had been so far taken in as actually to prepare a wedding suit. Of course, when the final summons came, I was utterly incredulous. It was something like the fable of the shepherd's boy and the wolf ; not a soul believed her, till the news arrived in a regular authentic document—a letter from her father—a worthy matter-of-fact man, whom poor Louisa's vagaries had actually kept in purgatory,—to mine, who also held the fair damsel for mad. Mr. S. mentioned his intended son-in-law as belonging to the medical profession ; and on looking back to Louisa's letters, which under the new stimulus of curiosity, as to the approaching *denouement*, we contrived to decypher, we discovered that for upwards of two months Louisa had been deeply smitten with a young physician newly arrived at L—, whom she called by the name of Henry, and of whose fine tall person, as well as his dark and manly beauty she gave a most flaming description. This, of course was the gentleman. I hastened to repair my fault and prepare my dresses ; wrote a letter of congratulation, packed my trunk, and set off. Imagine my astonishment, on arriving at L—, to

find Louisa *tête-à-tête* with a little fair lad of eighteen or twenty, the head and shoulders shorter than herself, soft, delicate and lady-like—the very image of one of Beaumont and Fletcher's girls, who dress themselves in boys' clothes for love—and to be introduced to him as Mr. Peter Sharp, surgeon, the happy *futur* of Miss Louisa! I was never in so much danger of laughing in my life.

I gathered, however, from her admissions, and her father's more rational account, that whilst our fair friend was, according to the vulgar phrase, 'setting her cap' at the handsome physician, the young surgeon, who had just finished his education by walking the hospitals, returned to L—, was taken into partnership by his father, and advised by his friends to look about for a wife as a necessary appendage to his profession—perhaps he might also be advised as to the lady, for Louisa has a pretty fortune for a country apothecary. However that might be, he began, as he assures me, to pay suit and service; whilst the fair object of his devotion, whose heart, or rather whose fancy, was completely pre-occupied, and who thought of Mr. Peter, if she thought of him at all, as a mere boy, entirely overlooked himself and his attentions—they being perhaps the only attentions of a young man which she ever did overlook in the whole course of her life. She confesses that the first entire sentence she ever heard

him utter was the offer—the actual offer of heart and hand. Most ladies in her situation would have been a little posed; but Louisa is not a woman to be taken unawares: she has thought too much on the subject; has too well-founded a reliance on her own changeability: besides, she had set her heart on the ‘pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious’ bridal; the wedding was the thing—the wedding-day—the man was of little importance; Peter might do as well as Henry—so she said yes, and all was settled.

And a very splendid wedding it was; really, for those who like such things, almost worth the troubles and anxieties of a twenty year’s love. The whole *cortège*, horses, carriages, friends, and bridemaids, down to the very breakfast cake and gloves, were according to most approved usage of books or of life. It might have made a fine conclusion to a novel; it did make a splendid paragraph in a newspaper. Every detail was correct, except one—nobody cried. That did vex her. That was an omission. She tried hard to repair it herself, and flourished her cambric handkerchief; but not a tear could she shed; neither could we, the bride-maidens, nor the father, nor the nuptial father, nor the clergyman, nor the clerk—nobody cried. The bridegroom came nearest—he, the only one who ought not to cry; but luckily he became sensible that it would

be a breach of etiquette, and turned the involuntary emotion into a smile. All else went well. May the omen be auspicious, and tears, and the source of tears, keep far away from the kind and gentle Louisa !

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

HARRY LEWINGTON.

"**Beg, Frisk, beg!**" said little Harry Lewington, as he sate in state on an inverted basket at his grandmother's door, discussing with great satisfaction, a huge porringer of bread and milk, whilst his sister Lucy, who had already despatched her breakfast, sate on the ground opposite to him, now twisting the long wreaths of the convolvulus-major into garlands—now throwing them away. "**Beg, Frisk, beg!**" repeated Harry, holding a bit of bread just out of the dog's reach; and the obedient Frisk squatted himself on his hind legs, and held up his fore paws, in patient supplication, until it pleased Master Harry to bestow upon him the tempting morsel.

The little boy and the little dog were great friends, notwithstanding that Harry, in the wantonness of power, would sometimes tease and tantalise his poor pet more

than a good boy should have done. Frisk loved him dearly, much better than he did Lucy, although Lucy gave him every day part of her breakfast, without making him beg, and would tie pretty ribbons round his neck, and pat and stroke his rough head for half an hour together. Harry was Frisk's prime favourite; perhaps because the little dog, being himself of a merry disposition, liked the boy's lively play better than the girl's gentle caresses; perhaps because he recollected that Harry was his earliest patron, and firmest friend, during a time of great trouble: quadrupeds of his species, having a knack of remembering past kindness, which it would do the biped, called man, no harm to copy.

Poor Frisk had come as a stray dog to Aberleigh. If he could have told his own story, it would probably have been a very pitiful one, of distresses and wanderings, of "hunger and foul weather," of kicks and cuffs, and all "the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes." Certain it is that he made his appearance at Mrs. Lewington's door in miserable plight, wet, dirty, and half-starved; that there he encountered Harry, who took an immediate fancy to him, and Mrs. Lewington, who drove him off with a broom; that a violent dispute ensued between the good dame and her grandson, Harry persisting in inviting him in, Mrs. Lewington in frightening him away; that at first it ended in Frisk's

being established as a sort of out-door pensioner, subsisting on odds and ends, stray bones, and cold potatoes, surreptitiously obtained for him by his young protector, and sleeping in the identical basket, which, turned topsy-turvy, afterwards served Harry for a seat ; until, at length, Mrs. Lewington, who had withstood the incessant importunity of the patron, and the persevering humility of his client, was propitiated by Frisk's own doggish exploit in barking away a set of pilferers, who were making an attack on her great pear-tree, and so frightening the thieves, that they not only scampered off in all haste, but left behind them their implements of thievery, a ladder, two baskets and a sack : the good dame being thus actually a gainer by the intended robbery, and so well satisfied with Frisk's conduct, that she not only admitted him into her house, but considered him as one of her most vigilant and valuable inmates, worth all the watchmen that ever sprung a rattle.

The new guard proved to be a four-footed person of singular accomplishments. He could fetch or carry, either by land or by water ; would pick up her thimble or cotton, if his old mistress happened to drop them ; carry Lucy's little pattens to school in case of a shower ; or take Harry's dinner to the same place with unimpeachable honesty. Moreover he was so strong on his hind legs, walked upright so firmly and gracefully, cut so many capers, and had so good an ear for music,

that the more sagacious amongst the neighbours suspected him of having been, at least, the principal performer in a company of dancing dogs, even if he were not the learned dog Munito himself. Frisk, and his exploits, were the wonder of Aberleigh, where he had now resided a twelve-month (for August was come round again) with honour and credit to himself, and perfect satisfaction to all parties.

" Beg, Frisk, beg !" said Harry, and gave him, after long waiting, the expected morsel ; and Frisk was contented, but Harry was not. The little boy, though a good humoured fellow in the main, had fits of naughtiness which were apt to last all day, and this promised to be one of his worst. It was a holiday moreover, when he had nothing to do but to be naughty, and in the afternoon his cousins Susan and William were to come and see him and Lucy, and the pears were to be gathered, and the children to have a treat ; and Harry, in his impatience, thought the morning would never be over, and played such pranks by way of beguiling the time—buffeting Frisk for instance, burning his own fingers, cutting the curls off his sister's doll's flaxen wig, and finally breaking his grandmother's spectacles,—that before his visitors arrived, indeed almost immediately after dinner, he contrived to get sent to bed in disgrace.

Poor Harry ! There he lay sprawling, kicking, and

roaring, whilst Susan and William, and Lucy, were happily busy about the fine mellow Windsor pears; William up the tree gathering and shaking, Lucy and Susan catching them in their pinafores, and picking them up from the ground; now piling the rich fruit into the great baskets that the thieves had left behind; and now, happy urchins, eating at discretion of the nicest and ripest; Frisk barking gaily amongst them as if he were eating Windsor pears too.

Poor Harry! He could hear all their glee and merriment through the open window as he lay in bed, and the storm of passion having subsided into a gentle rain of self-pity, there he lay weeping and disconsolate, a grievous sob bursting forth every now and then as he heard the loud peal of childish laughter, and thought how he should have laughed, and how happy he should have been, and wondered whether his grandmother would so far relent as to let him get up to supper, and whether Lucy would be so good-natured as to bring him a pear. "It will be very ill-natured if she does not," thought Harry, and the poor boy's tears burst out anew. All on a sudden he heard a little foot on the stair, pit-a-pat, and thought she was coming. Pit-a-pat came the foot, nearer and nearer, and at last a small head peeped, half-afraid, through the half-open door. But it was not Lucy's head; it was Frisk's—poor Frisk whom Harry had been teasing all the morning,

and who now came into the room wagging his tail with a great pear in his mouth, jumped on the bed, and laid it in the little boy's hand.

NOTE.—They who are accustomed to dogs whose sagacity has been improved by domestication and good society, will not be surprised at the foregoing anecdote. Cowper's story of the water-lily is quite a case in point; and a greyhound of my acquaintance, whose favourite playground was a large orchard, used regularly to bring the fallen apples to his mistress, was particularly anxious to get there after a windy night, and seemed to take singular pleasure in the amusement. This might be imitation; but an exploit of my own lamented and beautiful May-flower, can hardly be traced to such an origin. Poor May, in common with most pet dogs, generally cared little for the persons whose duty it was to feed and attend upon her; she seemed to know that it was their place, and received their services with calm and aristocratic civility, reserving all demonstrations of affection for her friends of the parlour. One of her attendants, however, a lively, good-humoured boy called Tom, she honoured with a considerable share of her attention, liked his company, and to the astonishment of the whole household, certainly liked him, a partiality which Tom returned with in-

terest, combing and caressing her whenever opportunity offered. Master Tom was a celebrated player at marbles, and May was accustomed to stand at his side watching or seeming to watch the game. One afternoon she jumped over the half-hatch into the stable, evidently in search of her friend Tom.—No Tom was there; raced round the garden—still in vain; peeped into the kitchen—Tom was as much to seek as ever; the maids who saw that she had something in her mouth, and were amused by her earnest searching air, tried to detain her or to decoy her into the parlour, but without the slightest success. On she went from chaise-house to wood-house, from wood-house to coal-house, from coal-house to cart-house, until she caught a well-known sound from the knife-board, and, opening a door in the way, darted on the astonished Tom (whose fright at the apparition cost one of our best carving forks, which he broke in his surprise) and deposited in his hand a marble, which as we afterwards found, she had picked up in the road, following up her present by a series of capers and gambols the most joyous and triumphant that can be imagined.

THE ELECTION.

A FEW years back a gentleman of the name of Danby came to reside in a small decayed borough town, not situate in our parts, and whether in Wiltshire or Cornwall matters not to our story, although to one of those counties the aforesaid town probably belonged, being what is called a close borough, the joint property of two noble families. Mr. Danby was evidently a man of large fortune, and that fortune as evidently acquired in trade,—indeed he made no more secret of the latter circumstance than of the former. He built himself a large, square, red house, equally ugly and commodious, just without the town; walled in a couple of acres of ground for a kitchen garden; kept a heavy one-horse chaise, a stout poney, and a brace of greyhounds; and having furnished his house solidly and handsomely, and arranged his domestic affairs to his heart's content, began to look about amongst his neighbours; scraped acquaintance with the lawyer, the apothecary, and the

principal tradesmen ; subscribed to the reading room and the billiard room ; became a member of the bowling green and the cricket club, and took as lively an interest in the affairs of his new residence, as if he had been born and bred in the borough.

Now this interest, however agreeable to himself, was by no means equally conducive to the quiet and comfort of the place. Mr. Danby was a little, square, dark man, with a cocked-up nose, a good-humoured, but very knowing smile, a pair of keen black eyes, a loud voluble speech, and a prodigious activity both of mind and body. His very look betokened his character,—and that character was one not uncommon among the middle ranks of Englishmen. In short, besides being, as he often boasted, a downright John Bull, the gentleman was a reformer, zealous and uncompromising as ever attended a dinner at the Crown and Anchor, or made an harangue in Palace-yard. He read Cobbett ; had his own scheme for the redemption of tithes ; and a plan, which, not understanding, I am sorry I cannot undertake to explain, for clearing off the national debt without loss or injury to any body.

Besides these great matters, which may rather be termed the theorique than the practise of reform, and which are at least perfectly inoffensive, Mr. Danby condescended to smaller and more worrying observances ; and was, indeed so strict and jealous a guardian

of the purity of the corporation, and the incorruptibility of the vestry, that an alderman could not wag a finger, or a churchwarden stir a foot, without being called to account by this vigilant defender of the rights, liberties, and purses of the people. He was, beyond a doubt, the most troublesome man in the parish—and that is a wide word. In the matter of reports and inquiries Mr. Hume was but a type of him. He would mingle economy with a parish dinner, and talk of retrenchment at the mayor's feast; brought an action, under the turnpike act, against the clerk and treasurer of the commissioners of the road; commenced a suit in chancery with the trustees of the charity school; and finally, threatened to open the borough—that is to say, to support any candidate who should offer to oppose the nominees of the two great families, the one whig and the other tory, who now possessed the two seats in parliament as quietly as their own hereditary estates;—a threat which recent instances of successful opposition in other places rendered not a little formidable to the noble owners.

What added considerably to the troublesome nature of Mr. Danby's inquisitions was, the general cleverness, ability, and information of the individual. He was not a man of classical education, and knew little of books; but with *things* he was especially conversant. Although very certain that Mr. Danby had been in

business, nobody could guess what that business had been. None came amiss to him. He handled the rule and the yard with equal dexterity; astonished the butcher by his insight into the mysteries of fattening and dealing; and the grocer by his familiarity with the sugar and coffee markets; disentangled the perplexities of the confused mass of figures in the parish books with the dexterity of a sworn accomptant; and was so great upon points of law, so ready and accurate in quoting reports, cases, and precedents, that he would certainly have passed for a retired attorney, but for the zeal and alertness with which, at his own expence, he was apt to rush into lawsuits.

With so remarkable a genius for turmoil, it is not to be doubted that Mr. Danby, in spite of many excellent and sterling qualities, succeeded in drawing upon himself no small degree of odium. The whole corporation were officially his enemies; but his principal opponent, or rather the person whom he considered as his principal opponent, was Mr. Cardonnel, the rector of the parish, who, besides several disputes pending between them (one especially respecting the proper situation of the church-organ, the placing of which harmonious instrument kept the whole town in discord for a twelve-month), was married to the Lady Elizabeth, sister of the Earl of B., one of the patrons of the borough; and

being, as well as his wife, of a very popular and amiable character, was justly regarded by Mr. Danby as one of the chief obstacles to his projected reform.

Whilst, however, our reformer was, from the most patriotic motives, doing his best or his worst to dislike Mr. Cardonnel, events of a very different nature were gradually operating to bring them together. Mr. Danby's family consisted of his wife,—a quiet lady-like woman, with very ill health, who did little else than walk from her bed to her sofa, eat water gruel and drink soda water,—and of an only daughter, who was, in a word, the very apple of her father's eye.

Rose Danby was indeed a daughter of whom any father might have been proud. Of middle height and exquisite symmetry, with a rich, dark, glowing complexion, a profusion of glossy, curling, raven hair, large affectionate black eyes, and a countenance at once so sweet and so spirited, that her ready smile played over her face like a sunbeam. Her temper and understanding were in exact keeping with such a countenance—playful, gentle, clever, and kind; and her accomplishments and acquirements of the very highest order. When her father entered on his new residence she had just completed her fifteenth year; and he, unable longer to dispense with the pleasure of her society, took her from the excellent school

near London, at which she had hitherto been placed, and determined that her education should be finished* by masters at home.

It so happened, that this little town contained one celebrated artist, a professor of dancing, who kept a weekly academy for young ladies, which was attended by half the families of gentility in the county. M. Le Grand (for the dancing master was a little lively Frenchman) was delighted with Rose. He declared that she was his best pupil, his very best, the best that ever he had in his life. "Mais voyez, donc, Monsieur!" said he one day to her father, who would have scorned to know the French for "How d'ye do;"—"Voyez, comme elle met de l'aplomb, de la force, de la netteté, dans ses entrechats! Qu'elle est leste, et légère, et petrie de graces, la petite!" And Mr. Danby comprehending only that the artist was praising his darling, swore that Monsieur was a good fellow, and returned the compliment, after the English fashion, by sending him a haunch of venison the next day.

But M. Le Grand was not the only admirer whom Rose met with at the dancing school.

It chanced that Mr. Cardonnel also had an only daughter, a young person, about the same age, bringing up under the eye of her mother, and a constant attendant at the professor's academy. The two girls nearly of a height, and both good dancers, were placed

together as partners ; and being almost equally prepossessing in person and manner, (for Mary Cardonnel was a sweet, delicate, fair creature, whose mild blue eyes seemed appealing to the kindness of every one they looked upon,) took an immediate and lasting fancy to each other ; shook hands at meeting and parting, smiled whenever their glances chanced to encounter ; and soon began to exchange a few kind and hurried words in the pauses of the dance, and to hold more continuous chat at the conclusion. And Lady Elizabeth, almost as much charmed with Rose as her daughter, seeing in the lovely little girl every thing to like, and nothing to disapprove, encouraged and joined in the acquaintance ; attended with a motherly care to her cloaking and shawling ; took her home in her own carriage when it rained ; and finally waylaid Mr. Danby, who always came himself to fetch his darling, and with her bland and gracious smile requested the pleasure of Miss Danby's company to a party of young people, which she was about to give on the occasion of her daughter's birthday. I am afraid that our sturdy reformer was going to say, No ! — But Rose's " Oh papa !" was irresistible ; and to the party she went.

After this, the young people became every day more intimate. Lady Elizabeth waited on Mrs. Danby, and Mrs. Danby returned the call ; but her state of health precluded visiting, and her husband, who piqued him-

self on firmness and consistency, contrived, though with some violence to his natural kindness of temper, to evade the friendly advances and invitations of the rector.

The two girls, however, saw one another almost every day. It was a friendship like that of Rosalind and Celia, whom, by the way, they severally resembled in temper and character—Rose having much of the brilliant gaiety of the one fair cousin, and Mary the softer and gentler charm of the other. They rode, walked and sang together; were never happy assunder; played the same music; read the same books; dressed alike; worked for each other; and interchanged their own little property of trinkets and flowers, with a generosity that seemed only emulous which should give most.

At first, Mr. Danby was a little jealous of Rose's partiality to the rectory; but she was so fond of him, so attentive to his pleasures, that he could not find in his heart to check her's: and when after a long and dangerous illness, with which the always delicate Mary was affected, Mr. Cardonnel went to him, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, told him he believed that under Providence he owed his daughter's life to Rose's unwearying care, the father's heart was fairly vanquished; he wrung the good rector's hand, and never grumbled at her long visits again. Lady Elizabeth, also, had her share in producing this change of feeling, by present-

ing him in return for innumerable baskets of peaches and melons, and hot-house grapes (in the culture of which he was curious), with a portrait of Rose, drawn by herself—a strong and beautiful likeness, with his own favourite greyhound at her feet; a picture which he would not have exchanged for “The Transfiguration.”

Perhaps too, consistent as he thought himself, he was not without an unconscious respect for the birth and station which he affected to despise; and was, at least, as proud of the admiration which his daughter excited in those privileged circles, as of the sturdy independence which he exhibited by keeping aloof from them in his own person. Certain it is, that his spirit of reformation insensibly relaxed, particularly towards the Rector; and that he not only ceded the contested point of the organ, but presented a splendid set of pulpit hangings to the church itself.

Time wore on; Rose had refused half the offers of gentility in the town and neighbourhood; her heart appeared to be invulnerable. Her less affluent and less brilliant friend was generally understood (and as Rose, on hearing the report, did not contradict it, the rumour passed for certainty) to be engaged to a nephew of her mother's, Sir William Frampton, a young gentleman of splendid fortune, who had lately passed much time at his fine place in the neighbourhood.

Time wore on; and Rose was now nineteen, when an event occurred, which threatened a grievous interruption to her happiness. The Earl of B's member died; his nephew Sir William Frampton, supported by his uncle's powerful interest, offered himself for the borough; an independent candidate started at the same time; and Mr. Danby found himself compelled, by his vaunted consistency, to insist on his daughter's renouncing her visits to the rectory, at least until after the termination of the election. Rose wept and pleaded, pleaded and wept in vain. Her father was obdurate; and she, after writing a most affectionate note to Mary Cardonnel, retired to her own room in very bad spirits, and, perhaps, for the first time in her life, in very bad humour.

About half an hour afterwards, Sir William Frampton and Mr. Cardonnel called at the red house.

"We are come, Mr. Danby," said the rector, "to solicit your interest"—

"Nay, nay, my good friend," returned the reformer—"you know that my interest is promised, and that I cannot with any consistency"—

"To solicit your interest with Rose"—resumed his reverence.

"With Rose!" interrupted Mr. Danby.

"Ay—for the gift of her heart and hand,—that being, I believe, the suffrage which my good nephew

here is most anxious to secure," rejoined Mr. Cardonnel.

"With Rose!" again ejaculated Mr. Danby: "Why I thought that your daughter"—

"The gipsy has not told you, then!" replied the rector. "Why William and she have been playing the parts of Romeo and Juliet for these six months past."

"My Rose!" again exclaimed Mr. Danby. "Why Rose! Rose! I say!" and the astonished father rushed out of the room, and returned the next minute, holding the blushing girl by the arm.

"Rose, do you love this young man?"

"Oh Papa!" said Rose.

"Will you marry him?"

"Oh, papa!"

"Do you wish me to tell him that you will not marry him?"

To this question Rose returned no answer; she only blushed the deeper, and looked down with a half smile.

"Take her, then," resumed Mr. Danby; "I see the girl loves you. I can't vote for you, though, for I've promised, and you know, my good Sir, that an honest man's word"—

"I don't want your vote, my dear Sir," interrupted Sir William Frampton; "I don't ask for your vote,

although the loss of it may cost me my seat, and my uncle his borough. This is the election that I care about; the only election worth caring about—Is it not my own sweet Rose?—the election of which the object lasts for life, and the result is happiness. That's the election worth caring about—Is it not mine own Rose?"

And Rose blushed an affirmative; and Mr. Danby shook his intended son-in-law's hand, until he almost wrung it off, repeating at every moment—"I can't vote for you, for a man must be consistent; but you're the best fellow in the world, and you shall have my Rose. And Rose will be a great lady," continued the delighted father;—"my little Rose will be a great lady after all!"

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

"CAN any one tell me of a house to be let hereabouts," asked I, this afternoon, coming into the room, with an open letter in my hand, and an unusual animation of feeling and of manner. "Our friends, the Camdens, want to live amongst us again, and have commissioned me to make enquiries for a residence."

This announcement, as I expected, gave general delight; for Mr. Camden is the most excellent and most agreeable person under the sun, except his wife, who is even more amiable than her amiable husband: to regain such neighbours was felt to be an universal benefit, more especially to us who were so happy as to call them friends. My own interest in the house question was participated by all around me, and the usual enumeration of vacant mansions, and the several objections to each (for where ever was a vacant mansion without its objection?) began with zeal and rapidity.

"Cranley Hall," said one.

"Too large!"

"Hinton Park?"

"Too much land."

"The White House at Hannonby—the Belvidere, as the late people called it?"

"What! Is that flourishing establishment done up? But Hannonby is too far off—ten miles at least."

"Queen's-bridge Cottage?"

"Aye that sweet place would have suited exactly, but it's let. The Browns took it only yesterday."

"Sydenham Court?"

"That might have done too, but it is not in the market. The Smiths intend to stay."

"Lanton Abbey?"

"Too low; grievously damp."

By this time, however, we had arrived at the end of our list; nobody could remember another place to be let, or likely to be let, and confessing ourselves too fastidious, we went again over our catalogue *raisonnée* with expectations much sobered, and objections much modified, and were beginning to find out that Cranley Hall was not so very large, nor Lanton Abbey so exceedingly damp, when one of our party exclaimed suddenly, "We never thought of Hatherden Hill! surely that is small enough and dry enough!" and it being immediately recollected that Hatherden was only a

mile off, we lost sight of all faults in this great recommendation, and wrote immediately to the lawyer who had the charge of letting the place, whilst I myself and my most efficient assistant, sallied forth to survey it on the instant.

It was a bright cool afternoon about the middle of August, and we proceeded in high spirits towards our destination, talking, as we went, of the excellence and agreeableness of our delightful friends, and anticipating the high intellectual pleasure, the gratification to the taste and the affections, which our renewed intercourse with persons so accomplished and so amiable, could not fail to afford; both agreeing that Hatherden was the very place we wanted, the very situation, the very distance, the very size. In agreeing with me, however, my companion could not help reminding me rather maliciously how very much, in our late worthy neighbours', the Norris's time, I had been used to hate and shun this paragon of places; how frequently I had declared Hatherden too distant for a walk, and too near for a drive; how constantly I had complained of fatigue in mounting the hill, and of cold in crossing the common; and how, finally, my half yearly visits of civility had dwindled first into annual, then into biennial calls, and would doubtless have extended themselves into triennial marks of remembrance, if our neighbours had but remained long enough. "To be

sure," added he, recollecting, probably, how he, with his stricter sense of politeness, used to stave off a call for a month together, taking shame to himself every evening for his neglect, retaining 'at once the conscience and the sin!' "To be sure, Norris was a sad bore! We shall find the hill easier to climb when the Camdens live on the top of it." An observation to which I assented most heartily.

On we went gaily; just pausing to admire Master Keep, the shoemaker's farming, who having a bit of garden-ground to spare, sowed it with wheat instead of planting it with potatoes, and is now, aided by his lame apprentice, very literally carrying his crop. I fancy they mean to thresh their corn in the woodhouse, at least there they are depositing the sheaves. The produce may amount to four bushels. My companion, a better judge, says to three; and it has cost the new farmer two superb scarecrows, and gunpowder enough for a review, to keep off the sparrows. Well, it has been amusement and variety, however! and gives him an interest in the agricultural corner of the county newspaper. Master Keep is well to do in the world, and can afford himself such a diversion. For my part, I like these little experiments, even if they be not over gainful. They show enterprise: a shoemaker of less genius would never have got beyond a crop of turnips.

On we went—down the lane, over the bridge, up

the hill—for there really is a hill, and one of some steepness for Berkshire, and across the common, once so dreary, but now bright and glittering, under the double influence of an August sun, and our own good spirits, until we were stopped by the gate of the lawn, which was of course locked, and obliged to wait until a boy should summon the old woman who had charge of the house, and who was now at work in a neighbouring harvest-field, to give us entrance.

Boys in plenty were there. The fine blackheaded lad, George Ropley—who, with his olive complexion, his bright dark eyes, and his keen intelligent features looks so Italian, but who is yet in all his ways so thoroughly and genially English—had been gathering in his father's crop of apples, and was amusing himself with tossing some twenty amongst as many urchins of either sex who had collected round him, to partake of the fruit and the sport. There he stood tossing the ripe ruddy apples; some high in the air for a catch, some low amongst the bushes for a hunt; some one way, some another, puzzling and perplexing the rogues, but taking care that none should go appleless in the midst of his fun. And what fun it was to them all, thrower and catchers! What infinite delight! How they laughed and shouted, and tumbled and ran! How they watched every motion of George Ropley's hand; the boys and the girls, and the "toddling wee things,"

of whom one could not distinctly make out whether they were the one or the other! And how often was that hand tossed up empty, flinging nothing, in order to cheat the wary watchers!—Now he threw an apple into the midst of the group, and what a scramble! Then at a distance, and what a race! The five nearest started; one, a great boy, stumbled over a mole-hill and was flung out; two of the little ones were distanced; and it was a neck and neck heat between a girl in a pink frock (my acquaintance Liddy Wheeler) and a boy in a tattered jacket, name unknown. With fair play Liddy would have beaten, but he of the ragged jacket pulled her back by her new pink frock, rushed forward, and conquered,—George gallantly flinging his last apple into her lap to console her for her defeat.

By this time the aged portress (Dame Wheeler, Liddy's grandmother) had given us admittance, and we soon stood on the steps in front of the house, in calm survey of the scene before us. Hatherden was just the place to like or not to like, according to the feeling of the hour; a respectable, comfortable country house, with a lawn before, a paddock on one side, a shrubbery on the other; offices and a kitchen garden behind, and the usual ornaments of villas and advertisements, a green-house and a veranda. Now my thoughts were *couleur de rose*, and Hatherden was

charming. Even the beds intended for flowers on the lawn, but which, under a summer's neglect, were now dismal receptacles of seeds and weeds, did not shock my gardening eye so much as my companion evidently expected. "We must get my factotum, Clarke, here to-morrow," so ran my thoughts, "to clear away that rubbish, and try a little bold transplanting: late hollyhocks, late dahlias, a few pots of lobellias and chrysanthemums, a few patches of coreopsis and china-asters, and plenty of scarlet geraniums, will soon make this desolation flourishing. A good gardener can move anything now-a-days, whether in bloom or not," thought I, with much complacency, "and Clarke's a man to transplant Windsor forest without withering a leaf. We'll have him to-morrow."

The same happy disposition continued after I entered the house. And when left alone in the echoing empty breakfast-room, with only one shutter opened, whilst Dame Wheeler was guiding the companion of my survey to the stable-yard, I amused myself with making in my own mind, comparisons between what had been, and what would be. There she used to sit, poor Mrs. Norris, in this large airy room, in the midst of its solid handsome furniture, in a great chair at a great table, busily at work for one of her seven small children; the table piled with frocks, trowsers, petticoats, shirts, pinafores, hats, bonnets, all sorts of children's gear

masculine and feminine, together with spelling books, copy books, ivory alphabets, dissected maps, dolls, toys, and gingerbread, for the same small people. There she sate a careful mother, fretting over their naughtiness and their ailments ; always in fear of the sun, or the wind, or the rain, of their running to heat themselves, or their standing still to catch cold : not a book in the house fit for a person turned of eight years old ! not a grown up idea ! not a thought beyond the nursery ! One wondered what she could have talked of before she had children. Good Mrs. Norris, such was she. Good Mr. Norris was, for all purposes of neighbourhood, worse still. He was gapy and fidgetty, and prosy and dozy, kept a tool chest and a medicine chest, weighed out manna and magnesia, constructed fishing-flies, and nets for fruit-trees, turned nutmeg-graters, lined his wife's work-box, and dressed his little daughter's doll ; and had a tone of conversation perfectly in keeping with his tastes and pursuits, abundantly tedious, thin and small. One talked down to him, worthy gentleman, as one would to his son Willy. These were the neighbours that had been. What wonder that the hill was steep, and the way long, and the common dreary ? Then came pleasant thoughts of the neighbours that were to be. The lovely and accomplished wife, so sweet and womanly ; the elegant and highly informed husband, so spirited and manly !

Art and literature, and wisdom and wit, adorning with a wreathy and garlanded splendour all that is noblest in mind and purest in heart? What wonder that Hatherden became more and more interesting in its anticipated charms, and that I went gaily about the place, taking note of all that could contribute to the comfort of its future inhabitants.

Home I came, a glad and busy creature, revolving in my mind the wants of the house and their speediest remedies—new paper for the drawing-room; new wainscoting for the dining parlour; a stove for the laundry; a lock for the wine cellar; baizing the door of the library; and new painting the hall;—to say nothing of the grand design of Clarke and the flower-beds.

So full was I of busy thoughts, and so desirous to put my plans in train without the loss of a moment, that although the tossing of apples had now resolved itself into a most irregular game of cricket,—George Ropley being batting at one wicket, with little Sam Coper for his mate at the other;—Sam, an urchin of seven years old, but the son of an old player, full of cricket blood, born, as it were, with a bat in his hand, getting double the notches of his tall partner,—an indignity which that well-natured stripling bore with surprising good humour: and although the opposite side consisted of Liddy Wheeler bowling at one end, her

old competitor of the ragged jacket at the other, and one urchin in trowsers, and one in petticoats, standing out ; in spite of the temptation of watching this comical parody on that manly exercise, rendered doubly amusing by the scientific manner in which little Sam stood at his wicket, the perfect gravity of the fieldsman in petticoats, and the serious air with which these two worthies called Liddy to order whenever she transgressed any rule of the game :—Sam will certainly be a great player some day or other, and so (if he be not a girl, for really there's no telling) will the young gentleman standing out. In spite, however, of the great temptation of overlooking a favourite divertimento, with variations so truly original, home we went, hardly pausing to observe the housing of Master Keep's wheat harvest. Home we went, adding at every step a fresh story to our Castle in the Air, anticipating happy mornings and joyous evenings at dear Hatherden ; in love with the place and all about it, and quite convinced that the hill was nothing, the distance nothing, and the walk by far the prettiest in this neighbourhood.

Home we came, and there we found two letters : one from Mr. Camden, sent per coach, to say that he found they must go abroad immediately, and that they could not therefore think of coming into Berkshire for a year or more ; one from the lawyer left in charge of Hatherden, to say, that we could not have the place,

as the Norris's were returning to their old house forthwith. And my Castle is knocked down, blown up—which is the right word for the demolishing of such airy edifices? And Hatherden is as far off, and the hill as steep, and the common as dreary as ever.

THE TWO SISTERS.

THE pretty square Farm-house, standing at the corner where Kibes Lane crosses the brook, or the brook crosses Kibes Lane, (for the first phrase, although giving by far the closest picture of the place, does, it must be confessed, look rather Irish), and where the aforesaid brook winds away by the side of another lane, until it spreads into a river-like dignity, as it meanders through the sunny plain of Hartley Common, and finally disappears amidst the green recesses of Pinge Wood—that pretty square Farm-house, half hidden by the tall elms in the flower court before it, which, with the spacious garden and orchard behind, and the extensive barn-yards and outbuildings, so completely occupies one of the angles formed by the crossing of the lane and the stream,—that pretty Farm-house contains one of the happiest and most prosperous families in Aberleigh, the large and thriving family of Farmer Evans.

Whether from skill or from good fortune, or as is most probable, from a lucky mixture of both, every thing goes right in his great farm. His crops are the best in the Parish: his hay is never spoiled; his cattle never die; his servants never thieve; his children are never ill. He buys cheap, and sells dear: money gathers about him like a snow-ball; and yet, in spite of all this provoking and intolerable prosperity, every body loves Farmer Evans. He is so hospitable, so good natured, so generous,—so homely! There, after all, lies the charm. Riches have not only not *spoilt* the man, but they have not altered him. He is just the same in look, and word, and way, that he was thirty years ago, when he and his wife, with two sorry horses one cow, and three pigs, began the world at Dean-Gate, a little bargain of twenty acres, two miles off:—aye, and his wife is the same woman!—the same frugal, tidy, industrious, good-natured Mrs. Evans, so noted for her activity of tongue and limb, her good looks, and her plain dressing: as frugal, as good-natured, as active, and as plain-dressing a Mrs. Evans at forty-five as she was at nineteen, and, in a different way, almost as good looking.

Their children—six “boys,” as Farmer Evans promiscuously calls them, whose ages vary from eight to eight and twenty—and three girls, two grown up, and one not yet seven, the youngest of the family, are just

what might be expected from parents so simple and so good. The young men, intelligent and well conducted; the boys, docile and promising; and the little girl as pretty a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked poppet, as ever was the pet and plaything of a large family. It is, however, with the eldest daughters that we have to do.

Jane and Fanny Evans were as much alike as hath often befallen any two sisters not born at one time;—for in the matter of twin children, there has been a series of puzzles ever since the days of the Dromios. Nearly of an age, (I believe that at this moment both are turned of nineteen, and neither have reached twenty) exactly of a stature, (so high that Frederick would have coveted them for wives for his tall regiment)—with hazel eyes, large mouths, full lips, white teeth, brown hair, clear healthy complexions, and that sort of nose which is neither Grecian nor Roman, nor aquiline, nor *le petit nez retroussé* that some persons prefer to them all; but a nose which, moderately prominent, and sufficiently well-shaped, is yet, as far as I know, anonymous, although it be perhaps as common and as well looking a feature as is to be seen on an English face.

Altogether, they were a pair of tall and comely maidens, and being constantly attired in garments of the same colour and fashion, looked at all times so much alike, that no stranger ever dreamed of knowing them

apart; and even their acquaintances were rather accustomed to think and speak of them generally as "the Evans's" than as the separate individuals, Jane and Fanny. Even those who did pretend to distinguish the one from the other, were not exempt from mistakes, which the sisters, Fanny especially, who delighted in the fun so often produced by the unusual resemblance, were apt to favour by changing places in a walk, or slipping from one side to the other at a country tea-party, or playing a hundred innocent tricks to occasion at once a grave blunder, and a merry laugh.

Old Tabitha Goodwin for instance, who being rather purblind, was jealous of being suspected of seeing less clearly than her neighbours, and had defied even the Evans's to puzzle her discernment—seeking in vain on Fanny's hand the cut finger which she had dressed on Jane's, ascribed the incredible cure to the merits of her own incomparable salve, and could hardly be undeceived, even by the pulling off of Jane's glove, and the exhibition of the lacerated digital sewed round by her own bandage.

Young George Bailey too, the greatest beau in the Parish, having betted at a Christmas party that he would dance with every pretty girl in the room, lost his wager (which Fanny had overheard) by that saucy damsel's slipping into her sister's place, and persuading her to join her own unconscious partner; so that

George danced twice with Fanny and not at all with Jane. A flattering piece of malice, which proved, as the young gentleman (a rustic exquisite of the first water) was pleased to assert, that Miss Fanny was not displeased with her partner. How little does a vain man know of woman-kind! If she had liked him, she would not have played the trick for the mines of Golconda.

In short, from their school-days, when Jane was chidden for Fanny's bad work, and Fanny slapped for Jane's bad spelling, down to this their prime of womanhood, there had been no end to the confusion produced by this remarkable instance of family likeness.

And yet Nature, who sets some mark of individuality upon even her meanest productions, making some unnoted difference between the lambs dropped from one ewe, the robins bred in one nest, the flowers growing on one stalk, and the leaves hanging from one tree, had not left these young maidens without one great and permanent distinction—a natural and striking dissimilarity of temper. Equally industrious, affectionate, happy, and kind; each was kind, happy, affectionate, and industrious in a different way. Jane was grave; Fanny was gay. If you heard a laugh or a song, be sure it was Fanny: she who smiled, for certain was Fanny: she who jumped the style, when her sister opened the

gate, was Fanny: she who chased the pigs from the garden as merrily as if she were running a race, so that the very pigs did not mind her, was Fanny.

On the other hand, she that so carefully was making, with its own ravelled threads, an invisible darn in her mother's handkerchief, and hearing her little sister read the while; she that so patiently was feeding, one by one, two broods of young turkies; she that so pensively was watering her own bed of delicate and somewhat rare plants,—the pale stars of the Alpine pink, or the alabaster blossoms of the white evening primrose, whose modest flowers, dying off into a blush, resembled her own character, was Jane.

Some of the gossips of Aberleigh used to assert, that Jane's sighing over the flowers, as well as the early steadiness of her character, arose from an engagement to my lord's head gardener, an intelligent, sedate, and sober young Scotchman. Of this I know nothing. Certain it is, that the prettiest and newest plants were always to be found in Jane's little flower border, and if Mr. Archibald Maclane did sometimes come to look after them, I do not see that it was any business of anybody's.

In the mean time, a visitor of a different description arrived at the farm. A cousin of Mrs. Evans's had been as successful in trade as her husband had been in

agriculture, and he had now sent his only son to become acquainted with his relations, and to spend some weeks in their family.

Charles Foster was a fine young man, whose father was neither more nor less than a rich linen-draper in a great town; but whose manners, education, mind, and character might have done honour to a far higher station. He was, in a word, one of nature's gentlemen; and in nothing did he more thoroughly shew his own taste and good breeding, than by entering entirely into the homely ways and old-fashioned habits of his country cousins. He was delighted with the simplicity, frugality, and industry, which blended well with the sterling goodness and genuine abundance of the great English farm-house. The young women especially pleased him much. They formed a strong contrast with anything that he had met with before. No finery! no coquetry! no French! no piano! It is impossible to describe the sensation of relief and comfort with which Charles Foster, sick of musical Misses, ascertained that the whole dwelling did not contain a single instrument, except the bassoon, on which George Evans was wont, every Sunday at Church, to excruciate the ears of the whole congregation. He liked both sisters. Jane's softness and considerateness engaged his full esteem; but Fanny's innocent playfulness suited best with his

own high spirits, and animated conversation. He had known them apart from the first; and indeed denied that the likeness was at all puzzling, or more than is usual between sisters, and secretly thought Fanny as much prettier than her sister, as she was avowedly merrier. In doors and out, he was constantly at her side; and before he had been a month in the house, all its inmates had given Charles Foster, as a lover, to his young cousin; and she, when rallied on the subject cried fie! and pish! and pshaw! and wondered how people could talk such nonsense, and liked to have such nonsense talked to her, better than anything in the world.

Affairs were in this state, when one night Jane appeared even graver and more thoughtful than usual, and far, far, sadder. She sighed deeply; and Fanny, for the two sisters shared the same little room, enquired tenderly, "What ailed her?" The enquiry seemed to make Jane worse. She burst into tears, whilst Fanny hung over her, and soothed her. At length, she roused herself by a strong effort; and turning away from her affectionate comforter, said in a low tone: "I have had a great vexation to-night, Fanny; Charles Foster has asked me to marry him."

"Charles Foster! Did you say Charles Foster?" asked poor Fanny, trembling, unwilling even to trust

her own senses against the evidence of her heart;
“ Charles Foster ?”

“ Yes, our cousin, Charles Foster.”

“ And you have accepted him ?” enquired Fanny, in a hoarse voice.

“ Oh no ! no ! Do you think I have forgotten poor Archibald ? Besides *I* am not the person whom he ought to have asked to marry him ; false and heartless as he is. I would not be his wife ; cruel, unfeeling, unmanly as his conduct has been ! No ! not if he could make me queen of England !”

“ You refused him then ?”

“ No, my father met us suddenly, just as I was recovering from the surprise and indignation, that at first struck me dumb. But I shall refuse him most certainly ;—the false, deceitful, ungrateful villain !”

“ My dear father ! He will be disappointed. So will my mother.”

They will both be disappointed, and both angry—but not at my refusal. Oh, how they will despise him !” added Jane ; and poor Fanny, melted by her sister’s sympathy, and touched by an indignation most unusual in that mild and gentle girl, could no longer command her feelings, but flung herself on the bed in that agony of passion and grief, which the first great sorrow seldom fails to excite in a young heart.

After a while she resumed the conversation. "We must not blame him too severely Jane. Perhaps my vanity made me think his attentions meant more than they really did, and you had all taken up the notion. But you must not speak of him so unkindly. He has done nothing but what is natural. You are so much wiser, and better than I am, my own dear Jane! He laughed and talked with me: but he felt your goodness,—and he was right. I was never worthy of him, and you are; and if it were not for Archibald, I should rejoice from the bottom of my heart," continued Fanny, sobbing, "if you would accept"—but unable to finish her generous wish she burst into a fresh flow of tears; and the sisters, mutually and strongly affected, wept in each other's arms, and were comforted.

That night Fanny cried herself to sleep: but such sleep is not of long duration. Before dawn she was up, and pacing, with restless irritability, the dewy grass-walks of the garden and orchard. In less than half an hour, a light elastic step (she knew the sound well!) came rapidly behind her; a hand, (oh, how often had she thrilled at the touch of that hand!) tried to draw hers under his own; whilst a well-known voice addressed her in the softest and tenderest accents: "Fanny, my own sweet Fanny! have you thought of what I said to you last night?"

“To *me*?” replied Fanny with bitterness.

“Aye, to be sure, to your own dear self! Do you not remember the question I asked you, when your good father, for the first time unwelcome, joined us so suddenly that you had no time to say, Yes? And will you not say *Yes* now?”

“Mr. Foster!” replied Fanny, with some spirit, “you are under a mistake here. It was to Jane that you made a proposal yesterday evening; and you are taking me for her at this moment.”

“Mistake you for your sister! Propose to Jane! Incredible! Impossible! You are jesting.”

“Then he mistook Jane for me, last night; and he is no deceiver!” thought Fanny to herself, as with smiles beaming brightly through her tears, she turned round at his reiterated prayers, and yielded the hand he sought to his pressure. “He mistook her for me! He, that defied us to perplex him!”

And so it was: an unconscious and unobserved change of place, as either sister resumed her station beside little Betsy, who had scampered away after a glow-worm, added to the deepening twilight, and the lover’s natural embarrassment, had produced the confusion which gave poor Fanny a night’s misery, to be compensated by a lifetime of happiness. Jane was almost as glad to lose a lover as her sister was to regain one:

Charles is gone home to his father's to make preparations for his bride; Archibald has taken a great nursery garden, and there is some talk in Aberleigh that the marriage of the two sisters is to be celebrated on the same day.

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

PRIDE SHALL HAVE A FALL.

“ So you Aberleigh boys are about to play Sandleford,” said George Leslie to Horace Lucas, “ have you a good eleven ?”

“ Our players are pretty fair, I believe,” replied Horace, “ but the number is short. Both sides have agreed to take a mate or two from other parishes, and I rode over to ask your cousin Charles and yourself to join our Aberleigh party.”

“ Faith! you are in luck my good friend,” cried George Leslie, “ you may look upon the game as won. Charles, to be sure, is no great hand ; can’t bowl ; hits up ; and a bad field—a slow awkward field. But I—Did you never see me play ? And I am so improved this season ! I ought to be improved, for I have seen such play, and such players ! I am just returned from my Aunt’s, who lives within a mile of Bramshill—Sir

John's you know—and there were all the great men of the day, all the Lord's men: Mr. Ward; and Mr. Budd—I'm thought to stand at my wicket very much like Mr. Budd; Saunders, who is reckoned, take him all in all, the best player in England; Saunders; and Broadbridge the Sussex bowler—I don't patronise their system though, I stick to the old steady scientific game; Lord Frederick; and Mr. Knight—he's a fine figure of a man is Mr. Knight, the finest figure of any of them, and very great in the field; old Howard the bowler,—he's my model; and in short, almost every celebrated cricketer in England. I know that you Westminsters think that nobody can do any thing so well as yourselves; but as far as cricket goes—ask Charles, he'll tell you that you are in luck to have me." And off the young gentleman strutted to pay his compliments to some ladies who were talking to his mother on the other side of the lawn; for this conversation took place on a fine day in July, under the heavy shadow of some tall elms, in Mrs. Leslie's beautiful grounds.

George's speech had been delivered in a high, solemn, vaunting tone, as grave as Don Quixote; but of the two who remained, Horace a quick, arch, lively lad, laughed outright, and Charles, a mild, fair, delicate boy, could not help smiling.

"He gives himself a comfortable character, how-

ever," said Horace, "rather too good to be true; whilst of you he speaks modestly enough. Are you so bad, Charles? And is he such a paragon of cricketers? Does he bat like Mr. Budd, and field like Mr. Knight, and bowl like Howard?"

"Why, not exactly," was the reply; "but there's more truth than you think for. He's a good, but uncertain player; and I am a bad one, a very bad one; shy and timid and awkward; always feeling when the game is over that I could have done better; just as I have felt when a clever man, your father, for instance, has had the goodness to speak to me, how much better I ought to have talked. Somehow the power never comes at the right time, at either game; so that I may say, as some people say of cucumbers, that I like cricket, but that cricket does not like me."

"Good or bad, my dear fellow, I'll take you," said Horace, "nervousness and all. It's a pity that you two cousins could not make over to one another some parcel of your several qualities; you would be much the happier for a dash of George's self-conceit, and he could spare enough to set up a whole regiment of dandies; whilst he would be all the better for your superfluous modesty. However, I'll take you both, right thankfully." And the arrangements were entered into forthwith. They were to meet on the ground the ensuing morning to play the match; different engage-

ments preventing the Leslies from practising with the Aberleigh side that evening, as Horace had wished and intended ; for our friend Horace, ardent and keen in every thing, whether of sport or study, had set his heart on winning this match, and was very desirous of trying the powers of his new allies. Fifty times during the evening did he count over his own good players, and the good players of the other side, and gravely conclude "It will all depend on the Leslies. How I wish to-morrow were come!" He said this so often that even his sister Emily, although the most indulgent person in the world, and very fond of her brother, grew so tired of hearing him that she could not help saying "I wish to-morrow were come too!"

And at last, as generally happens, whether we wish for it or not, to-morrow did come, as brilliant a to-morrow as ever was anticipated, even by a schoolboy in the holidays. The sun rose without a cloud ; I speak from the best authority, for "scorning the scorner sleep" Horace was up before him : and the ball being twenty times weighed and the bats fifty times examined, he repaired, by half-past nine, to Sandleford Common, where the match was to be played, and the wickets pitched precisely at ten o'clock.

All parties were sufficiently punctual ; and when the whole set had assembled, Horace found, that in spite of his calculations, a mistake had arisen in the

amount of his forces; that reckoning himself there were ten Aberleigh boys on the ground, besides the two foreign allies, proceeding, perhaps, from his over anxiety to collect recruits, whilst the Sandleford captain, on the contrary, had neglected to secure another mate as agreed on, and could only muster the original ten of his own parish, himself included.

In this dilemma the umpires immediately proposed to divide the auxiliaries, a suggestion to which George assented with his usual sang froid and Charles with his invariable good humour.

"You had better toss up for me," said the former. "For the choice," was Horace's civil amendment, and toss they did. "Heads!" cried he of Sandleford, and heads it was; and partly caught by the young gentleman's happy knack of puffing himself, partly by the knowing manner in which he was handling his bat, George was instantly claimed by the winner, and the game began.

Sandleford went in, and it was desired that the stranger and the best of the home party should take the precedence. But our great player coquetted. "It might put their side out of spirits if by any accident he were out early in the game; he had seen a match lost, by Mr. Budd or Saunders having their wickets knocked down sooner than was expected. He would

wait." Accordingly it was not till the first four had gone down with only twenty notches gained that he at last went in, "to retrieve," as he said, "the fortune of the day."

Nothing could be more imposing than his appearance. There he stood at the wicket striking his bat against the ground with impatience, pawing the earth as it were, like a race-horse at the starting-post, or a greyhound in the slips, and friends and foes admired and wondered. Even Horace Lucas felt the effect of the fine attitude and the brilliant animation, and delivered his ball less steadily than usual, anticipating that his opponent would get at least three runs. His fears were soon quieted. "By some accident" (to use the young gentleman's own phrase) Mr. George hit up; and that exceedingly bad field, his cousin Charles, caught him out without a notch.

This misadventure sadly disconcerted Sandleford as well as the unfortunate champion, and put Aberleigh in high spirits. Horace bowled better than ever; the fielding was excellent; and the whole eleven were out for forty seven notches—a wretched innings.

Aberleigh then went in; Horace, and at Horace's request, his ally Charles:—George being one of the bowlers. But poor George (to borrow once more his own words) was "out of luck, thoroughly out of luck,"

for in spite of all his efforts the two mates got fifty-six before they parted, and the whole score was a hundred and nine.

Eighty-two a head in the first innings! Small hopes for Sandleford, even though George went in immediately, "determined," as he said, "to conquer fortune." Small hopes for Sandleford!

"Come, Charles," said Horace Lucas, "let us see whether your bowling may not be as good as your batting. Just give your cousin one ball." And at the very first ball the stumps rattled, and the discomfitted cricketer slunk away, amidst the crowing of his antagonists and the reproaches of his mates, so crest-fallen, that even Horace was touched by his disconsolate countenance and humbled air. His tender-hearted cousin felt a still deeper sympathy, and almost lamented his own success.

"It is all luck, Sir," said he, in answer to a compliment from General Lucas, who stood talking to him after the match had been triumphantly won; "It is all luck! Poor George is a far better player than I am; he was so yesterday, and will be so to-morrow. This is merely the fortune of a day, a trifle not worth a word or a thought!"

"The object is trifling, I grant you, my good young friend," said the General, "and luck may have had

some share in the victory; but I am much mistaken if your success and your cousin's mortification be not of essential benefit to both. It is one of the most salutary parts of the world's discipline, that modesty should triumph and that Pride should have a Fall."

ROSEDALE.

I DON'T know how it happened when we were house-hunting the other day, that nobody ever thought of Rosedale. I should have objected to it, both as out of distance—it's a good six miles off; and as being utterly uncommendable by one rational person to another. Rosedale! the very name smacks of the Minerva Press, and gives token of the nonsense and trumpery thereunto belonging. Rosedale Cottage! the man who, under that portentous title takes that house, cannot complain of lack of warning.

Nevertheless is Rosedale one of the prettiest cottages that ever sprung into existence in brick or on paper. All strangers go to see it, and few "cots of spruce gentility" are so well worth seeing. Fancy a low irregular white rough-cast building thatched with reeds, covered with roses, clematis, and passion-flowers, standing on a knoll of fine turf, amidst flower-beds and shrubberies and magnificent elms, backed by an abrupt hill, and

looking over lawny fields to a green common, which is intersected by a gay high road, dappled with ponds of water, and terminated by a pretty village edging off into rich woodlands : imagine this picture of a place tricked out with ornaments of all sorts, conservatories, roseries, rustic seats, American borders, Gothic dairies, Spanish hermitages, and flowers stuck as close as pins in a pincushion, with every thing, in short, that might best become the walls of an exhibition room, or the back scene of a play : conceive the interior adorned in a style of elegance still more fanciful, and it will hardly appear surprising that this "unique bijou," as the advertisement calls it, should seldom want a tenant. The rapid succession of these occupiers is the more extraordinary matter. Every body is willing to come to Rosedale, but nobody stays.

For this, however, it is not difficult to assign very sufficient cause. In the first place, the house has the original sin of most ornamented cottages, that of being built on the foundation of a real labourer's dwelling ; by which notable piece of economy the owner saved some thirty pounds, at the expence of making half his rooms mere nutshells, and the house incurably damp,—to say nothing of the inconvenience of the many apartments which were erected as after-thoughts, the addenda of the work, and are only to be come at by out-side passages and French window-doors. Secondly, that

necessary part of a two-story mansion, the staircase, was utterly forgotten by architect, proprietor, and builder, and never missed by any person, till the ladder being one day taken away at the dinner hour, an Irish labourer, accidentally left behind, was discovered by the workmen on their return, perched like a bird on the top of the roof, he having taken the method of going up the chimney as the quickest way of getting down. This adventure occasioned a call for the staircase, which was at length inserted by the bye, and is as much like a step-ladder in a dark corner as any thing well can be *. Thirdly and lastly, this beautiful abode is in every way most thoroughly inconvenient and uncomfortable. In the winter one might find as much protection in the hollow of a tree—cold, gusty, sleety, wet; snow threatening from above like an avalanche; water gushing up from below like a fountain; a house of card-paper would be the solider refuge, a gipsey's tent by far the more snug. In summer it is proportionably close and hot, giving little shade and no shelter; and all the year round it is overdone with frippery and finery, a toy-shop in action, a Brobdignagian baby-house.

Every room is in masquerade: the saloon Chinese,

* This instance of forgetfulness is not unexampled. A similar accident is said to have happened to Madam d'Arblay in the erection of a cottage built from the profits of her admirable Camilla.

full of jars and mandarins and pagodas; the library Egyptian, all covered with hieroglyphics, and swarming with furniture crocodiles and sphynxes. Only think of a crocodile couch, and a sphynx sofa! They sleep in Turkish tents, and dine in a Gothic chapel *. Now English ladies and gentlemen in their every day apparel look exceedingly out of place amongst such mummery. The costume wont do. It is not in keeping. Besides, the properties themselves are apt to get shifted from one scene to another, and all manner of anomalies are the consequence. The mitred chairs and screens of the chapel, for instance, so very upright, and tall, and carved, and priestly, were mixed up oddly enough with the squat Chinese bonzes; whilst by some strange transposition a pair of nodding mandarins figured amongst the Egyptian monsters, and by the aid of their supernatural ugliness really looked human.

Then the room taken up by the various knicknackery, the unnamed and unnameable generation of gew-gaws! It always seemed to me to require more house-maids than the house would hold. And the same with the

* Some of the pleasantest days of my life have been spent in a house so furnished. But then it was of fitting dimensions, and the delightful persons to whom it belonged had a house in London, and a mansion in the country, and used their fancy villa much as one would use a marquee or a pleasure-boat, for gay parties in fine weather. Rosedale, unlucky place, was built to be lived in.

garden. You are so begirt with garlands and festoons, flowers above and flowers below, that you walk about under a perpetual sense of trespass, of taking care, of doing mischief, now bobbing against a sweet briar, in which rencontre you have the worst; now flapped in the face by a woodbine to the discomfiture of both parties, now revenging these vegetable wrongs by tripping up an unfortunate balsam; bonnets, coatskirts and flounces in equal peril! The very gardeners step gingerly, and tuck their aprons tightly round them before they venture into that fair demesne of theirs, which is, so to say, over-peopled. In short Rosedale is a place to look at, rather than live in; a fact which will be received without dispute by some score of tenants, by the proprietor of the county newspaper who keeps the advertisement of this matchless villa constantly set, to his no small emolument, and by the neighbourhood at large, to whom the succession of new faces, new liveries, and new equipages driving about our rustic lanes, and sometimes occupying a very tasty pew in the parish church, has long supplied a source of conversation as unfailing and as various as the weather.

The first person who ascertained, by painful experience, that Rosedale was uninhabitable, was the proprietor, a simple young man from the next town, who unluckily took it into his head that he had a taste for architecture and landscape gardening and so forth; and

falling into the hands of a London upholsterer and a country nurseryman, produced the effort of genius that I have endeavoured to describe. At the end of a month he found that nobody could live there; and with the advice of the nurseryman and the upholsterer began to talk of rebuilding and new modelling; nay, he actually went so far as to send for the bricklayer; but fortunately for our man of taste he had a wife of more sense than himself, who seized the moment of disappointment to disgust him with improvements and improvers, in which feat she was greatly aided by the bills of his late associates; put a stop at once to his projects and his complaints; removed with all speed to their old residence, an ugly, roomy, comfortable red-brick house in the market place at B.—; drew up a flaming advertisement, and turned the grumbling occupant into a thriving landlord. Lucky for him was the day in which William Walker Esquire, married Miss Bridget Tomkins, second daughter of Mr. Samuel Tomkins, attorney at law! And lucky for Mr. Samuel Tomkins was the hour in which he acquired a son-in-law more profitable in the article of leases than the two lords to whom he acted as steward both put together!

First on the list of tenants was a bride and bridegroom come to spend the early months of their nuptial life in this sweet retirement. They arrived towards the end of August with a great retinue of servants,

horses, dogs, and carriages, well bedecked with bridal favors. The very pointers had white ribbons round their necks, so splendid was their rejoicing, and had each as we were credibly informed, eaten a huge slice of wedding cake when the happy couple returned from church. The bride, whom every body except myself called plain, and whom I thought pretty, had been a great heiress, and had married for love the day she came of age. She was slight of form and pale of complexion, with a profusion of brown hair, mild hazel eyes, a sweet smile, a soft voice, and an air of modesty that clung about her like a veil. I never saw a more loveable creature. He was dark and tall and stout and bold, with an assured yet gentlemanly air, a loud voice, a confident manner, and a real passion for shooting. They stayed just a fortnight, during which time he contrived to get warned off half the manors in the neighbourhood, and cut down the finest elm on the lawn one wet morning to open a view of the high road. I hope the marriage has turned out a happy one, for she was a sweet gentle creature. I used to see her leaning over the gate watching his return from shooting with such a fond patience! And her bound to meet him when he did appear! And the pretty coaxing playfulness with which she patted and chided her rivals the dogs! Oh I hope she is happy! but I fear, I fear.

Next succeeded a couple from India, before whom

floated reports golden and gorgeous as the clouds at sunset. Inexhaustible riches; profuse expenditure; tremendous ostentation; unheard of luxury; ortolans; becaficos; French-beans at Christmas; green-peas at Easter; strawberries always; a chariot and six; twelve black footmen; and parrots and monkeys beyond all count. These were amongst the most moderate of the rumours that preceded them; and every idle person in the country was preparing to be a hanger-on; and every shopkeeper in B. on the watch for a customer; when up drove a quiet-looking old gentleman in a poney-chaise, with a quiet-looking old lady at his side, and took possession, their retinue following in a hack post-chaise. Whether the habits of this Eastern Cræsus corresponded with his modest debut, or his magnificent reputation, we had not time to discover, although from certain indications, I conceive that much might be said on both sides. They arrived in the middle of a fine October, while the China-roses covered the walls, and the China-asters, and dahlias, and fuschias, and geraniums in full blow, gave a summer brilliancy to the lawn; but scarcely had a pair of superb Common-prayer-books, bound in velvet, and a Bible with gold clasps entered in possession of the pew at Church, before "there came a frost, a nipping frost," which turned the China-asters, and the China-roses, brown, and the dahlias, and geraniums black, and the

nabob and the nabobess blue. They disappeared the next day, and have never been seen or heard of since.

Then arrived a fox-hunting Baronet, with a splendid stud and a splendid fortune. A young man, a single man, a handsome man! Every speculating mamma in the country fixed her eyes on Sir Robert for a son-in-law; papas were sent to call; brothers were enjoined to go out hunting, and get acquainted; nay, even certain of the young ladies themselves (I grieve to say it!) showed symptoms of condescension which might almost have made their grandmothers start from their graves. But what could they do? How could they help it, poor pretty things? The Baronet, with the instinct of a determined bachelor, avoided a young lady as a sparrow does a hawk, and discovering this shyness, they followed their instinct as the hawk would do in a similar case, and pursued the coy bird. It was what sportsmen call a fine open season, which being translated, means every variety of wintery weather except frost—dirty, foggy, sleety, wet; so such of our belles as looked well on horse-back, took the opportunity to ride to cover and see the hounds throw off; and such as shone more as pedestrians would take an early walk, exquisitely dressed, for their health's sake, towards the general rendezvous. Still Sir Robert was immovable. He made no morning calls, accepted no invitations, spoke to no mortal till he had ascertained

that there was neither sister, daughter, aunt, nor cousin in the case. He kept from every petticoat as if it contained the contagion of the plague, shunned ball-rooms and drawing-rooms, as if they were pest-houses, and finally, had the comfort of leaving Rosedale without having even bowed to a female during his stay. The final cause of his departure has been differently reported; some hold that he was frightened away by Miss Amelia Singleton, who had nearly caused him to commit involuntary homicide, (is that the word for killing a woman?) by crossing and recrossing before his hunter in Sallow-field-lane, thereby putting him in danger of a coroner's inquest; whilst others assert that his landlord, Mr. Walker, happening to call one day, found his tenant in dirty boots on the sphynx sofa, and a Newfoundland dog, dripping with mud on the crocodile couch, and gave him notice to quit on the spot. For my part I regard this legend as altogether apocryphal, invented to save the credit of the house, by assuming that one of its many inhabitants was turned out, contrary to his own wish. My faith goes entirely with the Miss Amelia version of the history; the more so, as that gentle damsel was so inconsolable as to marry a former beau, a small Squire of the neighbourhood, rather weather-beaten, and not quite so young as he had been, within a month after she had the ill luck not to be run over by Sir Robert.

However that may have been, "thence ensued a vacancy" in Rosedale, which was supplied the same week by a musical family, a travelling band, drums, trumpets, harps, pianos, violins, violincellos, trombones and German flutes—noise personified! an incarnation of din! The family consisted of three young ladies who practised regularly six hours a day; a governess who played on some instrument or other from morning till night; one fluting brother; one fiddling ditto; a violin-celloing music-master; and a singing papa. The only quiet person among them, the "one poor halfpenny-worth of bread to this monstrous quantity of sack," was the unfortunate mamma, sole listener. as it seemed, of her innumerable choir. Oh how we pitied her! She was a sweet placid-looking woman, and younger in appearance than either of her daughters, with a fair open forehead, full dark eyes, lips that seemed waiting to smile, a deep yet cool colour, and a heavenly composure of countenance, resembling in features, expression, and complexion the small Madonnas of Raphael. We never ceased to wonder at her happy serenity until we found out that the good lady was deaf, a discovery which somewhat diminished the ardour of our admiration. How this enviable calamity befell her, I did not hear,—but of course that din! The very jars and mandarins cracked under the incessant vibration; I only wonder that the poor house did not break

the drum of its ears ; did not burst from its own report, and explode like an overloaded gun. One could not see that unlucky habitation half a mile off, without such a feeling of noise as comes over one in looking at Hogarth's enraged musician. To pass it was really dangerous. One stage-coach was overturned, and two postchaises ran away in consequence of their uproarious doings ; and a sturdy old-fashioned country gentleman, who rode a particularly anti-musical, startlish, blood-horse, began to talk of indicting Rosedale as a nuisance, when just at the critical moment, its tenants had the good fortune to discover, that although the hermitage with its vaulted roof made a capital concert-room, yet that there was not space enough within doors for their several practisings, that the apartments were too small, and the partitions too thin, so that concord was turned into discord, and harmonies went crossing each other all over the house—Mozart jostled by Rossini, and Handel put down by Weber. And away they went also.

Our next neighbours were two ladies, not sisters, except as one of them said in soul ; kindred spirits determined to retire from the world, and emulate in this sweet retreat the immortal friendship of the ladies of Llangollen *. The names of our pair of friends were

* I need not, I trust, disclaim any intention of casting the lightest shade of ridicule on the remarkable instance of female

Jackson and Jennings, Miss Laura Jackson (I wonder whether Laura really was her name! She signed herself so in prose and in verse, and would certainly for more reasons than one have disliked an appeal to the Register! besides she ought to know; so Laura it shall be!) Miss Laura Jackson and Miss Barbara Jennings, commonly called Bab. Both were of that unfortunate class of young ladies, whom the malicious world is apt to call old maids; both rich, both independant, and both in the fullest sense of the word cockneys. Laura was tall and lean, and scraggy and yellow, dressing in an Arcadian sort of way, pretty much like an opera shepherdess without a crook, singing pastoral songs prodigiously out of tune, and talking in a deep voice, with much emphasis and astounding fluency all sorts of sentimentalities all the day long. Miss Barbara on the other hand was short and plump and round-faced and ruddy, inclining to vulgarity as Laura to affectation,

friendship to which I have alluded in the text. An union enduring as that has done, from youth to age, adorned by rank, talent, and beauty, cemented by cheerfulness and good humour, and consecrated by benevolence and virtue, can fear no one's censure, and soars far beyond my feeble praise. Such a friendship is the very poetry of life. But the heartless imitation, the absurd parody of the noble and elevating romance is surely fair game, the more so, as it tends like all parodies to bring the original into undeserved disrepute.

with a great love of dancing, a pleasant chuckling laugh, and a most agreeable habit of assentation. Altogether Bab was a likeable person in spite of some nonsense, which is more ~~than~~ could honestly be said for her companion.

Juxta-position laid the corner stone of this immortal friendship, which had already lasted four months and a half, and cemented by resemblance of situation, and dissimilarity of character, really bade fair to continue some months longer. Both had been heartily weary of their previous situations: Laura keeping house for a brother in Aldersgate Street, where as she said she was overwhelmed by odious vulgar business; Barbara living with an aunt on Fish-street Hill, where she was tired to death of having nothing to do. Both had a passion for the country. Laura, who except one jaunt to Margate, had never been out of the sound of Bow-bell, that she might ruralize after the fashion of the poets, sit under trees and gather roses all day long; Bab, who in spite of yearly trips to Paris and Brussels and Amsterdam and Brighton, had hardly seen a green field except through a coach window, was on her side possessed with a mania for notability and management; *she yearned to keep cows, fatten pigs, breed poultry, grow cabbages, make hay, brew and bake, and wash and churn.* Visions of killing her own mutton flitted over her delighted fancy; and when one evening at a ball in

the Borough her favourite partner had deserted her to dance with her neice, and Miss Laura, who had been reading Miss Seward's letters, proposed to her to retire from the world and its vanities in imitation of the illustrious recluses of Llangollen, Miss Barbara caught above all things with the prospect of making her own butter every morning for breakfast *, acceded to the proposal most joyfully.

The vow of friendship was taken, and nothing remained but to look out for a house. Barbara wanted a farm, Laura a cottage; Barbara talked of cows and clover, Laura of nightingales and violets; Barbara sighed for Yorkshire pastures, Laura for Welch mountains; and the scheme seemed likely to go off for want of an habitation, when Rosedale in all the glory of advertisement shone on Miss Laura in the Morning Post, and was immediately engaged by the delighted friends on a lease of seven, fourteen, or one and twenty years.

It was a raw blowy March evening, when the fair partners arrived at the Cottage. Miss Laura made a speech in her usual style on taking possession. An invocation to friendship and rural nature, and a deprecation of cities, society and men; at the conclusion of which Miss Barbara underwent an embassy; and having sufficiently admired the wonders within, they

* Vide Anna Seward's Correspondence.

sallied forth with a candle and lanthorn to view their ruralities without. Miss Laura was better satisfied with this ramble than her companion. She found at least trees and primroses, whilst the country felicities of ducks and chickens were entirely wanting. Bab, however, reconciled the matter by supposing they were gone to roost, and a little worn out by the journey wisely followed their example.

The next day saw Miss Laura obliged to infringe her own most sacred and inviolable rule, and admit a man—the apothecary—into this maiden abode. She had sate under a tree the night before listening not to, but for a nightingale, and was laid up by a most unpastoral fit of the rheumatism. Barbara in the meanwhile was examining her territory by day-light, and discovering fresh cause of vexation at every step. Here she was in the country, in a cottage “comprising,” as the advertisement set forth, “all manner of convenience and accommodation,” without grass or corn, or cow or sheep, or pig or chicken, or turkey or goose;—no laundry, no brewhouse, no pigstye, no poultry-yard! not a cabbage in the garden! not a useful thing about the house! Imagine her consternation!

But Barbara was a person of activity and resource. She sallied out forthwith to the neighbouring village, bought utensils and live stock; turned the coach-house into a cow-stall; projected a pigstye in the roseray; in-

stalled her ducks and geese in the orangery ; introduced the novelty of real milk-pans, churns and butter-prints amongst the old china, Dutch-tiles and stained glass of that make-believe toy the Gothic dairy ; placed her brewing vessels in ' the housekeeper's room,' which to accord with the genius of the place had been fitted up to represent a robber's cave ; deposited her washing-tubs in the butler's pantry, which with a similar regard to congruity had been decorated with spars and shells like a Nereid's grotto ; and finally, in spite of all warning and remonstrance, drove her sheep into the shrubbery, and tethered her cows upon the lawn.

This last stroke was too much for the gardener's patience. He betook himself in all haste to B. to apprise Mr. Walker ; and Mr. Walker armed with Mr. Samuel Tomkins and a copy of the lease made his appearance with breathless speed at Rosedale. Barbara, in spite of her usual placidity made good battle on this occasion. She cried and scolded and reasoned and implored ; it was as much as Mr. Walker, and Mr. Samuel Tomkins aided by their mute witness the lease, and that very clamorous auxiliary the gardener, could do to out talk her. At last, however, they were victorious. Poor Miss Bab's live stock were forced to make a rapid retreat, and she would probably have marched off at the same time had not an incident occurred which brought her visions of rural felicity, much

nearer to reality than could have been anticipated by the liveliest imagination.

The farmer's wife of whom she had made her purchases, and to whom she unwillingly addressed herself to resume them, seeing, to use her own words, "how much Madam seemed to take on at parting with the poor dumb things," kindly offered to accommodate them as boarders at a moderate stipend, volunteering also lessons in the chicken-rearing and pig-feeding department, of which the lady did to be sure stand rather in need.

Of course Barbara closed with this proposal at a word. She never was so happy in her life ; her cows, pigs, and poultry, en pension, close by, where she might see them every hour if she liked, and she herself with both hands full, learning at the Farm, and ordering at the Cottage, and displaying all that can be imagined of ignorance and good humour at both.

Her mistakes were innumerable. Once for instance, she carried away by main force from a turkey, whose nest she had the ill-luck to discover, thirteen eggs, just ready to hatch, and after a severe combat with the furious and injured hen, brought them home to Rosedale as fresh-laid—under a notion rather new in natural history, that turkeys lay all their eggs in one day. Another time she discovered a hoard of choice double dahlia roots in a tool-house belonging to her old enemy

the gardener, and delivered them to the cook for Jerusalem artichokes, who dressed them as such accordingly. No end to Barbara's blunders! but her good-humour, her cheerfulness, her liberality and the happy frankness with which she laughed at her own mistakes, carried her triumphantly through. Every body liked her, especially a smug little curate who lodged at the very farm-house where her pigs and cattle were boarded, and said twenty times a day that Miss Barbara Jennings was the pleasantest woman in England. Barbara was never so happy in her life.

Miss Laura, on her part, continued 'rheumatic and poorly, and kept closely to her bed-chamber, the Turkish tent, with no other consolations than novels from the next town and the daily visits of the apothecary. She was shocked at Miss Barbara's intimacy with the farm people, and took every opportunity of telling her so. Barbara, never very fond of her fair companion's harangues, and not the more reconciled to them from their being directed against her own particular favourites, ran away as often as she could. So that the two friends had nearly arrived at the point of not speaking, when they met one afternoon by mutual appointment in the Chinese saloon. Miss Barbara blushed and looked silly, and seemed trying to say something which she could not bring out. Miss Laura tried to blush rather unsuccessfully. She however could talk at all times, her

powers of speech were never known to fail ; and at the end of an oration in which she proved, as was pretty evident, that they had been mistaken in supposing the company of each all-sufficient to the other as well as in their plan of seclusion from the world, she invited Miss Barbara, after another vain attempt at a blush, to pay the last honours to their friendship by attending her to the hymeneal altar, whither she had promised to accompany Mr. Opodeldoc on the morning after the next.

“ I can't,” replied Miss Barbara.

“ And why not ?” resumed Miss Laura. “ Surely Mr. Opodel——”

“ Now, don't be angry !” interrupted our friend Bab. “ I can't be your bridemaide the day after to-morrow, because I am going to be married to-morrow myself.”

And so they left Rosedale and I shall leave them.

WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

Nov. 6.—The weather is as peaceful to-day, as calm, and as mild, as in early April; and, perhaps, an autumn afternoon and a spring morning do resemble each other more in feeling, and even in appearance, than any two periods of the year. There is in both the same freshness and dewiness of the herbage; the same balmy softness in the air; and the same pure and lovely blue sky, with white fleecy clouds floating across it. The chief difference lies in the absence of flowers, and the presence of leaves. But then the foliage of November is so rich, and glowing, and varied, that it may well supply the place of the gay blossoms of the spring; whilst all the flowers of the field or the garden could never make amends for the want of leaves,—that beautiful and graceful attire in which nature has clothed the rugged forms of trees—the verdant drapery to

which the landscape owes its loveliness, and the forests their glory.

If choice must be between two seasons, each so full of charm, it is at least no bad philosophy to prefer the present good, even whilst looking gratefully back, and hopefully forward, to the past and the future. And, of a surety, no fairer specimen of a November day could well be found than this,—a day made to wander

“ By yellow commons and birch-shaded hollows,
And hedgerows bordering unfrequented lanes ;”

nor could a prettier country be found for our walk than this shady and yet sunny Berkshire, where the scenery, without rising into grandeur or breaking into wildness, is so peaceful, so cheerful, so varied, and so thoroughly English.

We must bend our steps towards the water side, for I have a message to leave at Farmer Riley's: and sooth to say, it is no unpleasant necessity; for the road thither is smooth and dry, retired, as one likes a country walk to be, but not too lonely, which women never like; leading past the Loddon—the bright, brimming, transparent Loddon—a fitting mirror for this bright blue sky, and terminating at one of the prettiest and most comfortable farm-houses in the neighbourhood.

How beautiful the lane is to-day, decorated with a thousand colours! The brown road, and the rich ver-

dure that borders it, strewed with the pale yellow leaves of the elm, just beginning to fall ; hedgerows glowing with long wreaths of the bramble in every variety of purplish red ; and overhead the unchanged green of the fir, contrasting with the spotted sycamore, the tawny beech, and the dry sere leaves of the oak, which rustle as the light wind passes through them : a few common hardy yellow flowers (for yellow is the common colour of flowers, whether wild or cultivated, as blue is the rare one), flowers of many sorts, but almost of one tint, still blowing in spite of the season, and ruddy berries glowing through all. How very beautiful is the lane !

And how pleasant is this hill where the road widens, with the group of cattle by the way side, and George Hearn, the little post-boy, trundling his hoop at full speed, making all the better haste in his work, because he cheats himself into thinking it play ! And how beautiful again, is this patch of common at the hill top with the clear pool, where Martha Pither's children,—elves of three, and four, and five years old,—without any distinction of sex in their sunburnt faces and tattered drapery, are dipping up water in their little homely cups shining with cleanliness, and a small brown pitcher with the lip broken, to fill that great kettle, which, when it is filled, their united strength will never be able to lift ! They are quite a group for a painter with their rosy cheeks, and chubby hands, and round

merry faces; and the low cottage in the back-ground, peeping out of its vine leaves and china roses, with Martha at the door, tidy, and comely, and smiling, preparing the potatoes for the pot, and watching the progress of dipping and filling that useful utensil, completes the picture.

But we must get on. No time for more sketches in these short days. It is getting cold too. We must proceed in our walk. Dash is shewing us the way and beating the thick double hedgerow that runs along the side of the meadows, at a rate that indicates game astir, and causes the leaves to fly as fast as an east-wind after a hard frost. Ah! a pheasant! a superb cock pheasant! Nothing is more certain than Dash's questing, whether in a hedgerow or a covert, for a better spaniel never went into the field; but I fancied that it was a hare afoot, and was almost as much startled to hear the whirring of those splendid wings, as the princely bird himself would have been at the report of a gun. Indeed, I believe, that the way in which a pheasant goes off, does sometimes make young sportsmen a little nervous (they don't own it very readily, but the observation may be relied on nevertheless), until they get as it were broken into the sound; and then that grand and sudden burst of wing becomes as pleasant to them, as it seems to be to Dash, who is beating the hedgerow with might and main, and giving

tongue louder, and sending the leaves about faster than ever—very proud of finding the pheasant, and perhaps a little angry with me for not shooting it; at least looking as if he would be angry if I were a man; for Dash is a dog of great sagacity, and has doubtless not lived four years in the sporting world without making the discovery, that although gentlemen do shoot, ladies do not.

The Loddon at last! the beautiful Loddon! and the bridge where every one stops, as by instinct, to lean over the rails, and gaze a moment on a landscape of surpassing loveliness,—the fine grounds of the Great House with their magnificent groups of limes, and firs, and poplars grander than ever poplars were; the green meadows opposite, studded with oaks and elms; the clear winding river; the mill with its picturesque old buildings bounding the scene; all glowing with the rich colouring of autumn, and harmonized by the soft beauty of the clear blue sky, and the delicious calmness of the hour. The very peasant whose daily path it is, cannot cross that bridge without a pause.

But the day is wearing fast, and it grows colder and colder. I really think it will be a frost. After all, spring is the pleasantest season, beautiful as this scenery is. We must get on. Down that broad yet shadowy lane, between the park, dark with evergreens and dappled with deer, and the meadows where sheep,

and cows, and horses, are grazing under the tall elms ; that lane, where the wild bank, clothed with fern, and tufted with furze, and crowned by rich berried thorn, and thick shining holly on the one side, seems to vie in beauty with the picturesque old paling, the bright laurels, and the plummy cedars, on the other ;—down that shady lane, until the sudden turn brings us to an opening where four roads meet, where a noble avenue turns down to the Great House ; where the village church rears its modest spire from amidst its venerable yew trees ; and where, embosomed in orchards and gardens, and backed by barns and ricks, and all the wealth of the farm-yard, stands the spacious and comfortable abode of good Farmer Riley,—the end and object of our walk.

And in happy time the message is said, and the answer given, for this beautiful mild day is edging off into a dense frosty evening ; the leaves of the elm and the linden in the old avenue are quivering and vibrating and fluttering in the air, and at length falling crisply on the earth, as if Dash were beating for pheasants in the tree tops ; the sun gleams dimly through the fog, giving little more of light or heat than his fair sister the lady moon ;—I don't know a more disappointing person than a cold sun ; and I am beginning to wrap my cloak closely round me, and to calculate the distance to my own fire-side, recanting all the way •

my praises of November, and longing for the showery flowery April as much as if I were a half-chilled butterfly, or a dahlia knocked down by the frost.

Ah dear me ! what a climate this is, that one cannot keep in the same mind about it for half an hour together ! I wonder by the way whether the fault is in the weather, which Dash does not seem to care for, or in me ? If I should happen to be wet through in a shower next spring, and should catch myself longing for autumn, that would settle the question.

CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

THE TWO DOLLS.

A LUCKY day it was for little Fanny Elvington when her good aunt Delmônt consented to receive her into her family, and sent for her from a fine old place, six miles from hence, Burdon Park, where she had been living with her maternal grandfather, to her own comfortable house in Brunswick Square. Poor Fanny had no natural home, her Father, General Elvington, being in India with his lady; and a worse residence than the Park could hardly be devised for a little girl, since Lady Burdon was dead, Sir Richard too sickly to be troubled with children, and the care of his grand-daughter left entirely to a vulgar old nurse and a superfine housekeeper. A lucky day for Fanny was that in which she exchanged their misrule for the wise and gentle government of her good aunt Delmont.

Fanny Elvington was a nice little girl, who had a

great many good qualities, and, like other little girls, a few faults ; which had grown up like weeds under the neglect and mismanagement of the people at the Park, and threatened to require both time and pains to eradicate. For instance, she had a great many foolish antipathies and troublesome fears, some caught from the affectation of the housekeeper, some from the ignorance of the nurse : she shrieked at the sight of a mouse, squalled at a frog, was well nigh ready to faint at an earwig, and quite as much afraid of a spider as if she had been a fly ; she ran away from a quiet ox, as if he had been a mad bull, and had such a horror of chimney-sweepers that she shrank her head under the bedclothes whenever she heard the deep cry of " sweep ! sweep !" forerunning the old clothesman and the milkman on a frosty morning, and could hardly be persuaded to look at them, poor creatures, dressed in their tawdry tinsel and dancing round Jack of the Green on May-day. But her favourite fear, her pet aversion, was a negro ; especially a little black footboy who lived next door, and whom she never saw without shrinking, and shuddering, and turning pale.

It was a most unlucky aversion for Fanny, and gave her and her aunt more trouble than all her other mislikings put together, inasmuch as Pompey came oftener in view than mouse or frog, spider or earwig, ox or

chimney-sweep. How it happened nobody could tell, but Pompey was always in Fanny Elvington's way. She saw him twice as often as any one else in the house. If she went to the window, he was sure to be standing on the steps : if she walked in the Square garden, she met him crossing the pavement ; she could not water her geraniums in the little court behind the house, but she heard his merry voice singing in broken English as he cleaned the knives and shoes on the other side of the wall ; nay, she could not even hang out her Canary bird's cage at the back door, but he was sure to be feeding his parrot at theirs. Go where she would, Pompey's shining black face and broad white teeth followed her : he haunted her very dreams ; and the oftener she saw him, whether sleeping or waking, the more her unreasonable antipathy grew upon her. Her cousins laughed at her without effect, and her aunt's serious remonstrances were equally useless.

The person who, next to Fanny herself, suffered the most from this foolish and wicked prejudice, was poor Pompey, whose intelligence, activity, and good-humour, had made him a constant favourite in his master's house, and who had sufficient sensibility to feel deeply the horror and disgust which he had inspired in his young neighbour. At first he tried to propitiate her by bringing groundsel and chickweed for her Canary bird,

running to meet her with an umbrella when she happened to be caught in the rain, and other small attentions, which were repelled with absolute loathing.

"Me same flesh and blood with you, missy, though skin be black," cried poor Pompey one day when pushed to extremity by Fanny's disdain, "same flesh and blood missy!" a fact which the young lady denied with more than usual indignation; she looked at her own white skin, and she thought of his black one; and all the reasoning of her aunt failed to convince her, that where the outside was so different, the inside could by possibility be alike. At last Mrs. Delmont was fain to leave the matter to the great curer of all prejudices, called Time, who in this case seemed even slower in his operations than usual.

In the mean while, Fanny's birthday approached, and as it was within a few days of that of her cousin Emma Delmont, it was agreed to celebrate the two festivals together. Double feasting! double holiday! double presents! never was a gayer anniversary. Mrs. Delmont's own gifts had been reserved to the conclusion of the jollity, and after the fruit was put on the table, two huge dolls, almost as big as real babies, were introduced to the little company. They excited and deserved universal admiration. The first was a young lady of the most delicate construction and the most

elaborate ornament ; a doll of the highest fashion, with sleeves like a bishop, a waist like a wasp, a magnificent bustle, and petticoats so full and so puffed out round the bottom, that the question of hoop or no hoop was stoutly debated between two of the elder girls. Her cheeks were very red, and her neck very white, and her ringlets in the newest possible taste. In short, she was so completely *à la mode* that a Parisian milliner might have sent her as a pattern to her fellow tradeswoman in London, or the London milliner might have returned the compliment to her sister artist over the water. Her glories, however, were fated to be eclipsed. The moment that the second doll made its appearance, the lady of fashion was looked at no longer.

The second doll was a young gentleman, habited in the striped and braided costume which is the ordinary transition dress of boys between leaving off petticoats and assuming the doublet and hose. It was so exactly like Willy Delmont's own attire, that the astonished boy looked at himself, to be sure that the doll had not stolen the clothes off his back. The apparel, however, was not the charm that fixed the attention of the young people ; the attraction was the complexion, which was of as deep and shining a black, as perfect an imitation of a negro, in tint and feature, as female ingenuity could accomplish. The face, neck, arms, and legs were all

covered with black silk ; and much skill was shewn in shaping and sewing on the broad flat nose, large ears and pouting lips, whilst the great white teeth and bright round eyes relieved the monotony of the colour. The wig was of black worsted, knitted and then unravelled, as natural as if it had actually grown on the head. Perhaps the novelty (for none of the party had seen a black doll before) might increase the effect, but they all declared that they had never seen so accurate an imitation, so perfect an illusion. Even Fanny, who at first sight had almost taken the doll for her old enemy Pompey in little, and had shrunk back accordingly, began at last to catch some of the curiosity (for curiosity is a catching passion) that characterized her companions. She drew near—she gazed—at last she even touched the doll, and listened with some interest to Mrs. Delmont's detail of the trouble she found in constructing the young lady and gentleman.

“ What are they made of, aunt ? ”

“ Rags, my dear ! ” was the reply : “ nothing but rags,” continued Mrs. Delmont, unripping a little of the black gentleman's foot and the white lady's arm, and showing the linen of which they were composed ;—“ both alike, Fanny,” pursued her good aunt, “ both the same colour underneath the skin, and both the work of the same hand—like Pompey and you,” added she more solemnly ; “ and now choose which doll you will.”

And Fanny, blushing and hesitating, chose the black one ; and the next day her aunt had the pleasure to see her show it to Pompey over the wall, to his infinite delight ; and, in a very few days, Mrs. Delmont had the still greater pleasure to find that Fanny Elvington had not only overcome and acknowledged her prejudice, but had given Pompey a new half-crown, and had accepted groundsel for her Canary bird from the poor negro boy.

NOTE.—About a month after sitting to me for his portrait, the young black gentleman whom I have endeavoured to describe (I do not mean Pompey but the doll,) set out upon his travels. He had been constructed in this little Berkshire of ours for some children in the great county of York, and a friend of mine, travelling northward had the goodness to offer him a place in her carriage for the journey. My friend was a married woman accompanied by her husband and another lady, and finding the doll cumbersome to pack, wrapped it in a large shawl and carried it in her lap baby fashion. At the first inn where they stopped to dine, she handed it carelessly out of the carriage before alighting, and was much amused to see it received with the grave officious tenderness usually shewn to a real infant by the nicely dressed hostess, whose consternation, when,

still taking it for a living child, she caught a glimpse of the complexion, is said to have been irresistibly ludicrous. Of course my friend did not undeceive her. Indeed I believe she humoured the mistake wherever it occurred all along the north road, to the unspeakable astonishment and mystification of chambermaids and waiters.

HOPPING BOB.

It was on a rainy day, late in last November, that Mrs. Villars came to take possession of her new residence, called the Lodge, a pretty house about ten miles off, situated within the boundaries of Oakhampstead Park, the pleasant demesne of her brother-in-law, Sir Arthur Villars, and generally appropriated to the use of some dowager of that ancient and wealthy race.

Mrs. Villars was an elderly lady of moderate fortune and excellent character. She was the widow of a dignified and richly-beneficed clergyman, who had been dead some years, and had left her with three promising sons and two pretty daughters, all of whom were now making their way in the world to her perfect satisfaction;—the daughters happily and respectably married; the sons thriving in different professions; and all of them as widely scattered as the limits of our little island could well permit;—so that their mother, disencumbered of the cares of her offspring, had

nothing now to prevent her accepting Sir Arthur's kind offer of leaving the great town in which she had hitherto resided, and coming to occupy the family jointure-house at Oakhampstead. To inhabit a mansion in which so many stately matrons of the house of Villars had lived and died, was a point of dignity no less than of economy; and besides, there was no resisting so excellent an opportunity of gratifying amidst the good Archdeacon's native shades, the taste for retirement and solitude of which she had all her life been accustomed to talk. Talk indeed she did so very much of this taste, that shrewd observers somewhat questioned its existence, and were not a little astonished when, after dallying away the summer over take-leave visits, she and her whole establishment (two maids, a pony-chaise, a tabby-cat, and her scrub, Joseph,) left C, with its society and amusements, its morning calls, and evening parties, for solitude and the Lodge.

Never was place or season better calculated to bring a lover of retirement to the test. Oakhampstead, separated from our populous neighbourhood by a barrier of wild heath, was situated in the most beautiful and least inhabited part of a thinly inhabited and beautiful county; the roads were execrable; the nearest post town was seven miles off; the vicar was a bachelor of eighty; and the great house was shut up. There

was not even one neighbour of decent station to whom she might complain of the want of a neighbourhood. Poor Mrs. Villars! the last stroke too—the desertion of the park—was an unexpected calamity; for although she knew that Sir Arthur had never resided there since the death of a most beloved daughter, after which event it had been entirely abandoned, except for a few weeks in the autumn, when, his only son, Harry Villars, had been accustomed to visit it for the purpose of shooting, yet she had understood that this her favourite nephew was on the point of marriage with the beautiful heiress of General Egerton, and that this fine old seat was to form the future residence of the young couple. Something she learned had now occurred to prevent an union which, a few months ago, had seemed so desirable to all parties. Some dispute between the fathers, originally trifling, but worked up into bitterness by the influence of temper; and all preparations were stopped, Harry Villars gone abroad, and the great house as much shut up as ever. Poor Mrs. Villars, who, after all her praises of retirement and her declared love of solitude, could not with any consistency run away from this “Deserted Village,” was really as deserving of pity as any one guilty of harmless affectation well could be.

The good lady, however, was not wanting to herself in this emergency. She took cold, that she might

summon an apothecary from the next town; and she caused her pigs to commit a trespass on the garden of a litigious farmer, that she might have an excuse for consulting the nearest attorney. Both resources failed. The medical man was one of eminent skill and high practice, whom nothing but real illness could allure into constant attendance; and the lawyer was honest, and settled the affair of the pigs at a single visit. All that either could do for her was to enumerate two or three empty houses that might possibly be filled in the course of the next summer, and two or three people who would probably call when the roads became passable: so that poor Mrs. Villars, after vainly trying to fill up her vacant hours—Alas! all her hours!—by superintending her own poultry-yard, overlooking the village-school, giving away flannel petticoats, and relieving half the old women in the parish, had very nearly made up her mind to find the Lodge disagree with her, and to return to her old quarters at C, when the arrival of a fresh inmate at the next farm-house gave an unexpected interest to her own situation.

Oakhampstead was, as I have said, a very beautiful spot. It's chief beauty consisted in a small lake or mere without the park, surrounded partly by pastoral meadow-grounds, and partly by very wild and romantic woodland scenery, amongst which grew some of the noblest oaks in the kingdom. The water did

not, perhaps, cover more than thirty acres ; although a length disproportioned to its breadth, a bend in the middle, and above all, the infinite variety of its shores, indented with tiny bays and jutting out into mimic promontories, gave it an appearance of much greater extent. Rides and walks had formerly been cut around it ; but these were now rude and overgrown, the rustic seats decayed and fallen, and the summer-houses covered with ivy and creeping plants. Since the absence of Sir Arthur neglect had succeeded to care ; but a poet or a painter would have felt that the scene had gained in picturesqueness what it had lost in ornament. A green boat, however, and a thatched boat-house still remained in excellent preservation under the shadow of some magnificent elms ; and the chimney of the boatman's cottage might just be seen peeping between the trees, over the high embankment which formed the head of the lake. The only other habitation visible from the water was an old farm-house, the abode of Farmer Ashton, whose wife, formerly the personal attendant of the late Lady Villars, had soon been found by her surviving relative to be by far the most conversable person in the place ; and if the many demands on her attention, the care of men, maids, cows, calves, pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, and children, would have allowed her to devote much time to the unfortunate lady, her society would doubtless have proved a

great solace and resource. But Mrs. Ashton, with all her desire to oblige Mrs. Villars, was enviably busy, and could only at short and distant intervals listen to, and, by listening relieve the intolerable ennui of her seclusion.

Now, however, a fresh inmate had made her appearance at the farm : a young woman, whom Mrs. Ashton called Anne, and introduced as her neice ; who having much leisure (for apparently she did nothing in the family but assist in the lighter needle-work), and evincing, as far as great modesty and diffidence would permit, her respectful sympathy with the involuntary recluse, became her favourite auditress during her frequent visits to Farmer Ashton's ; and was soon sent for as a visitor (an humble visitor, for neither Mrs. Villars nor her young guest ever forgot the difference of their stations) at the Lodge. Seldom a day passed without Joseph and the pony-chaise being sent to fetch Anne from the farm. Nothing went well without her.

Partly, of course, the charm might be resolvable into the bare fact of getting a listener ; any good listener would have been a welcome acquisition in this emergency ; that is to say, any one who felt and shewed a genuine sympathy with the "Fair afflicted ;" but few would have been so welcome as Anne, who soon be-

came, on the score of her own merits, a first-rate favourite with Mrs. Villars.

Whether Anne was pretty or not was a standing question in the village of Oakhampstead. Her zealous patroness answered without the slightest hesitation in the affirmative. Other people doubted. For the poorer sort her face and figure wanted showiness; whilst the young farmers and persons of that class complained that she was not according to their notions sufficiently genteel. Mrs. Villars's man-of-all-work, Joseph, combined both objections by declaring that Anne would be well enough if she were smarter. My readers must judge for themselves, as well at least as a pen-and-ink drawing will enable them.

Her figure was round and short, and piquante and youthful. Her face was round also, with delicate features and a most delicate complexion, as white and smooth as ivory, and just coloured enough for health. She had finely cut grey eyes, with dark eye-brows and eye-lashes, a profusion of dark hair, and a countenance so beaming with gaiety and sweetness, that the expression was always like that of other faces when they smile. Then her voice and accent were enchanting. She sang little snatches of old airs in gushes like a nightingale—freely, spontaneously, as if she could no more help singing as she went about than that “angel

of the air :” and her spoken words were as musical and graceful as her songs ; what she said being always sweet, gentle and intelligent ; sometimes very lively, and sometimes a little sad.

Her dress was neat and quiet,—plain dark gowns, fitting with great exactness, such as were equally becoming to her station and her figure ; delicately white caps and habit-shirts, and the simplest of all simple straw bonnets. The only touch of finery about her was in her chausure ; the silk stockings and kid slippers in which her beautiful little feet were always clad, and in her scrupulously clean and new-looking French gloves, of the prettiest pale colours ;—a piece of quaker-like and elegant extravagance, which, as well as the purity of her accent and diction, somewhat astonished Mrs. Villars, until she found from Mrs. Ashton, that Anne also had been a lady’s maid, admitted early into the family, and treated almost as a companion by her young mistress.

“ Where had she lived ?” was the next question.

“ In General Egerton’s family,” was the reply ; and a new source of interest and curiosity was opened to the good lady, who had never seen her niece, that was to have been, and was delighted with the opportunity of making a variety of enquiries respecting herself and her connections. Anne’s answers to these questions were given with great brevity and some reluctance ; she looked down and blushed, and fidgetted with a sprig

of myrtle which she held in her hand, in a manner widely different from her usual lady-like composure.

" Was Miss Egerton so very handsome ?"

" Oh, no !"

" So very accomplished ?"

" No."

" Did Harry love her very much ?"

" Yes."

" Did she love him ?"

" Oh, yes !"

" Was she worthy of him ?"

" No."

" Ah !" said Mrs. Villars, " I thought she was too fine a lady, too full of airs and graces ! I have had my doubts of her ever since a note that she sent me, written on blue embossed paper, and smelling most atrociously of otto of roses. I dare say Harry has had a narrow escape. Sir Arthur, even before the quarrel, said she was quite a petite maitresse. Then you think, Anne, that my nephew is better without her ?"

This query caused a good deal of blushing hesitation, and nearly demolished the sprig of myrtle. On its being repeated, she said, " She did not know ! she could not tell ! She did not wish to speak ill of Miss Egerton ; but few ladies appeared to her worthy of Mr. Villars—he was so amiable."

" Was Miss Egerton kind to her ?"

" Pretty well," answered Anne quietly.

" And the General?"

" Oh, very! very!" rejoined Anne sighing deeply.

" Why did she leave the family?"

At this question poor Anne burst into tears, and the conversation ended. Mrs. Villars, unwilling to distress her favourite, did not resume it. She was already pre-possessed against the Egertons by the disappointment and vexation which they had occasioned to her nephew, and had little doubt but that either the General or his daughter had behaved unjustly or unkindly to Anne.

Winter had now worn away; even those remains of winter which linger so long amidst the buds and blossoms of spring; spring itself had passed into summer, the country was every day assuming fresh charms, the roads were becoming passable, and distant neighbours were beginning to discover and to value the lady of the Lodge, who became more reconciled to her residence, varied as it now was by occasional visits to the county families, and frequent excursions with Anne upon the lake.

On these occasions they were constantly attended by the boatman, a handy, good-humoured, shock-pated fellow, of extraordinary ugliness, commonly called Bob Green, but also known by the name of "Hopping Bob;" not on account of his proficiency in that one legged accomplishment, as the cognomen would seem to imply,

but because an incurable lameness in the hip had produced a jerking sort of motion in walking, much resembling that mode of progress ; and had also given a peculiar one-sided look to his short muscular figure. The hop, it must be confessed, stood much in his way on land, although he was excellent in the management of a boat ; in rowing, or steering, or fishing, or anything that had relation to the water.

A clever fellow was Bob, and a civil, and paid much attention to his lady and her young companion ; and as the summer advanced, they passed more and more time on the beautiful lake, of which they continued the sole visitors ; the great house being still deserted, and little known either of Sir Arthur or his son.

One afternoon, Mrs. Villars, returning unexpectedly from a distant visit, drove down to the farm, intending to spend the evening with Anne in the pleasure-boat. It was a bright sunny day towards the middle of July. The blue sky, dappled with fleecy clouds, was reflected on the calm clear water, and mingled with the shadows of the trees upon the banks, to which the sun, shining through the tall oaks, gave occasionally a transparent glitter, as of emeralds or beryls ; swallows skimmed over the lake, flitting around and about, after the myriads of insects that buzzed in the summer air ; the white water-lily lay in its pure beauty in the midst of its deep green leaves ; the fox-glove and the wild

veitch were glowing in the woods ; the meadow-sweet, the willow-herb, and the golden flag fringed the banks ; cows stood cooling their limbs in the shallow indented bays, and a flock of sheep was lying at rest in the distant meadows.

Altogether it was a scene of sweet and soothing beauty ; and Mrs. Villars was looking for Anne to partake in her enjoyment (for Anne, Mrs. Ashton had told her, was gone down to the mere), when in a small cove at the other side of the lake, she beheld in a fine effect of sunny light, the boat, their own identical green boat, resting quietly on the water, with two persons sitting in it, seemingly in earnest conversation. One of the figures was undoubtedly Anne. Her astonished friend recognised at a glance her lead-coloured gown, her straw bonnet, and that peculiar air and attitude which gave grace and beauty to her simple dress. The other was a man, tall as it seemed, and elegant—most certainly a gentleman. Mrs. Villars even fancied that the height and bearing had a strong resemblance to her own dear nephew, Harry ; and immediately a painful suspicion of the possible cause of Anne's leaving Miss Egerton forced itself upon her mind. Harry had perhaps found the lady's maid no less charming than her mistress !

A thousand trifling circumstances in favour of this opinion rushed on her recollection : Anne's blushes

when Harry was accidentally named : her constant avoidance of all mention of the family in which she had resided : the great inequality of her spirits ; her shrinking from the very sight of chance visitors ; the emotion amounting to pain, which any remarkable instance of kindness or confidence never failed to occasion her ; and above all, the many times in which, after seeming on the point of making some avowal to her kind patroness, she had drawn suddenly back : all these corroborating circumstances pressed at once with startling distinctness, on Mrs. Villars's memory ; and, full of care, she returned to the farm to cross-question Mrs. Ashton.

Never was examination more thoroughly unsatisfactory. Mrs. Ashton was that provoking and refractory thing, a reluctant witness. First, she disputed the facts of the case : " had Mrs. Villars seen the boat ? Was she sure that she had seen it ? Was it actually their own green boat ? Did it really contain two persons ? And was the female certainly Anne ? "

All these questions being answered in the affirmative, Mrs. Ashton shifted her ground, and asserted that " If the female in question were certainly Anne, her companion must with equal certainty have been the boatman, Bob Green, ' Hopping Bob,' as he was called ! " and the farmer coming in at the moment, she called on him to support her assertion, which, without hearing a word of the story, he did most positively, as a dutiful

and obedient husband ought to do—" Yes, for certain it must be Hopping Bob! It could be no other."

" Hopping Bob!" ejaculated Mrs. Villars, whose patience was by this time well nigh exhausted: " Hopping Bob! when I have told you that the person in the boat was a young man, a tall man, a slim man, a gentleman! Hopping Bob, indeed!" and before the words were fairly uttered, in hopped Bob himself.

To Mrs. Villars this apparition gave unqualified satisfaction, by affording, as she declared, the most triumphant evidence of an alibi ever produced in or out of a court of justice. Her opponent, however, was by no means disposed to yield the point. She had perfect confidence in Bob's quickness of apprehension, and no very strong fear of his abstract love of truth, and determined to try the effect of a leading question. She immediately, therefore, asked him, with much significance of manner, " whether he had not just landed from the lake, and reached the farm by the short cut across the coppice?" adding " that her niece had probably walked towards the boat house to meet Mrs. Villars, and that Bob had better go and fetch her."

This question produced no other answer than a long whistle from the sagacious boatman. Whether Mrs. Ashton over-rated his ability, or under-rated his veracity, or whether his shrewdness foresaw that detection was inevitable, and that it would " hurt his conscience

to be found out," whichever were the state of the case he positively declined giving any evidence on the question; and after standing for a few moments eyeing his hostess with a look of peculiar knowingness, vented another long whistle, and hopped off again.

Mrs. Villars, all her fears confirmed, much disgusted with the farmer, and still more so with the farmer's wife, was also departing, when just as she reached the porch, she saw two persons advancing from the lake, to the house—her nephew Harry Villars, and Anne leaning on his arm!

With a countenance full of grieved displeasure, she walked slowly towards them. Harry sprang forward to meet her: "Hear me but for one moment, my dearest aunt! Listen but to four words, and then say what you will. This is my wife."

"Your wife! why I thought you loved Miss Egerton?"

"Well and this *is*, or rather happily for me this *was* Miss Egerton;" replied Henry smiling.

"Miss Egerton!" exclaimed the amazed and half incredulous Mrs. Villars, "Miss Egerton! Anne, that was not smart enough for Joseph, the fine lady that sent me the rose-scented note! Anne at the farm, the great heiress! My own good little Anne!"

"Aye, my dear Aunt, your own Anne and my own Anne—blessings on the word! When we were parted on a foolish political quarrel between our fathers, she

was sent under the care of her cousin Lady Lemingham to Florence. Lady Lemingham was much my friend. She not only persuaded Anne into marrying me privately, but managed to make the General believe that his daughter continued her inmate abroad ; whilst Mrs. Ashton, another good friend of mine, contrived to receive her at home. We have been sad deceivers," continued Harry, "and at last Anne, fettered by a promise of secrecy, which your kindness tempted her every moment to break, could bear the deceit no longer. She wrote to her father, and I spoke to mine ; and they are reconciled, and all is forgiven. I see that you forgive us," added he, as his sweet wife lay sobbing on Mrs. Villars's bosom,—“ I see that you forgive *her* ; and you must forgive me too, for her dear sake. Your pardon is essential to our happiness ; for we are really to live at the park, and one of our first wishes must always be, that you may continue at the Great House the kindness that you have shewn to Anne at the Farm.”

. A VISIT TO RICHMOND.

THE Macadamised roads, and the light open carriages lately introduced, have so abridged, I had well nigh said annihilated, distance in this fair Island, that what used to be a journey, is now a drive; our neighbourhood has become, from a reverse reason to theirs, as extensive as that of the good people in the back settlements of America; we think nothing of thirty miles for a morning call, or forty for a dinner-party; Richmond is quite within visiting distance, and London will shortly be our market-town.

This pleasant change was never so strongly imprest on my mind as by a hasty and most agreeable jaunt which I made to the former of these places during one of the few fine days last summer. The invitation, written one day, arrived in course of post by breakfast-time the next, and without any uncomfortable hurry in packing or setting off, we were quietly dining with our kind inviters, rather before than after our

usual hour, and might have returned very conveniently the same evening, had we been so minded.

There was some temptation to this exploit besides the very great one of whisking to and fro like a jack o'lantern, and making all the village stare at our rapidity. Our road lay through the Forest, and we might have passed again by moonlight the old romantic royal town of Windsor, with its stately palace and its Shakspearian associations—I never catch a glimpse of those antique buildings, but those “Merry Wives” and all their company start up before my eyes; might have heard the night-wind rustle amongst the venerable oaks and beeches of its beautiful park; might have seen the deer couching in the fern, and the hare scud-ding across the glades; and as we paused to contemplate the magical effects of light and shadow which forest scenery displays at such an hour, might have seen the castle in the distance, throwing its dark masses against the sky, and looking like some stupendous work of nature, or some grand dream of gothic architecture, rather than an actual erection of man. Every body that has seen Windsor by moonlight will understand how much one wishes to see that most striking sight again;—but our friends were not people to run away from, besides I wanted to get better acquainted with the celebrated spot where they resided;—so we staid.

“God made the Country and man made the Town!” I wonder in which of the two divisions Cowper would have placed Richmond. Every Londoner would laugh at the rustic who should call it town, and with foreigners it passes pretty generally for a sample (the only one they see) of the rural villages of England; and yet it is no more like the country, the real untrimmed genuine country, as we see it hereabouts for instance, than a garden is like a field. I do not say this in disparagement. Richmond is nature in a court-dress, but still nature,—aye and very lovely nature too, gay and happy and elegant as one of Charles the Second’s beauties, and with as little to remind one of the original penalty of labour, or poverty: or grief, or crime. I suppose that since no place on the globe is wholly exempt from their influence care and vice may exist even there. They are however well hidden. The inhabitants may find them, or they may find the inhabitants, but to the casual visitor, Richmond appears as a sort of fairy-land, a piece of the old Arcadia, a holiday spot for ladies and gentlemen, where they lead a happy out-of-door life, like the gay folks in Watteau’s pictures, and have nothing to do with the work-a-day world.

The principal charm of this smiling landscape is the river, the beautiful river; for the hill seems to me over-rated. That celebrated prospect is to my eye,

too woody, too leafy, too green. There is a monotony of vegetation, a heaviness. The view was finer, as I first saw it in February, when the bare branches admitted frequent glimpses of houses and villages, and the colouring was left to the fancy, than when arrayed in the pomp and garniture of "the leafy month of June." Canova said it only wanted crags. I rather incline to the old American criticism, and think that it wants clearing.

But the river ! the beautiful river ! there is no overrating that. Brimming to its very banks of meadow or of garden ; clear, pure, and calm, as the bright summer sky, which is reflected in clearer brightness from its bosom ;—no praise can be too enthusiastic for that glorious stream. How gracefully it glides through the graceful bridge ! And how the boats become it ! And how pretty those boats are, from the small skiff of the market woman laden with fruit and flowers, or the light-green pleasure vessel with its white awning and its gay freight of beaux and belles, to the heavy steam-boat which comes walloping along with a regular mechanical combination of noise and motion, rumpling the quiet waters, and leaving a track of waves which vary most agreeably the level lake-like surface of the tranquil river. Certainly the Thames is the pleasantest highway in his majesty's dominions.

Some of the happiest hours I ever passed in my life

were spent on its bosom in one of those sweet and shady June mornings, when the light clouds seemed as it were following the sun, and enfolding him in a thousand veils of whiter alabaster, and the soft air came loaded with fragrance from gardens which were one flush of roses and honeysuckles. I shall not easily forget that morning. Gliding along through those beautiful scenes with companions worthy of their beauty ; sunk in that silence of deep enjoyment, that delicious dreaminess which looks so like thought, although in reality a much wiser and happier thing ; listening half-unconsciously to Emily I's sweet Venetian ballads, the singer and her song so suited to the scene and the hour ; repeating almost as unconsciously as we met the Queen-birds,

“ The swans on fair St. Mary's lake,
Float double, swan and shadow ;”

just roused as we passed Pope's grotto, or the arch over Strawberry Hill ; and then landing at Hampton Court, the palace of the Cartoons and of the Rape of the Lock, and coming home with my mind full of the divine Raphael and of that glorious portrait of Titian by himself, which next to the Cartoons forms the chief ornament of that regal mansion ;—strangely chequered and intersected as those strange things fancy and memory are apt to be, by vivid images of the fair Belinda, and of that inimitable game at Ombre which will live longer

than any painting, and can only die with the language. There is no forgetting that morning.

Another almost as pleasant was passed in going down the river towards Kew, amongst all sorts of royal recollections, from the remains of the house of Anne of Cleves, to the lime trees fragrant with blossom and musical with bees, under which the late king and queen used to sit of a summer evening, whilst their children were playing round them on the grass. Kew Palace is in fine harmony with this pretty family scene. One likes to think of royalty so comfortable and homely and unconstrained, as it must have been in that small ugly old-fashioned house. Princes are the born thralls of splendour, and to see them eased of their cumbrous magnificence produces much such a sensation of pleasure as that which one feels in reading the fine passage of *Ivanhoe*, where the collar is taken from the neck of Gurth, and he leaps up a free man. At Kew, too, in those confined and ill-furnished rooms, the royal inhabitants were not without better luxuries; books accessible and readable, and looking as if they had been read, and a fine collection of cabinet pictures: superb Canaletti's; the famous *Dropsical Woman* on which the queen is said during her last illness to have fixed her eyes so frequently and with such an intense expression of self-pity; and a portrait of Vandyke, which rivals the Titian, the elegant Vandyke with his head over

the shoulder, which has been so often engraved. What a noble race of men those great painters were! There is nothing in all their works grander or fuller of intellectual beauty than some of their own heads, as we find them recorded in their portraits of themselves, or in the interesting collection of Vasari.

This remark will hardly apply to one great Painter, whose residence forms one of the many delightful associations of Richmond. Sir Joshua, who flattered all other persons, did himself so little justice, that in his own portraits he might pass for a dancing master. His Villa is here; rich in remembrances of Johnson and Boswell and Goldsmith and Burke; here the spot where the poet Thompson used to write; here the elegant house of Owen Cambridge; close by the celebrated villa of Pope, where one seems to see again Swift and Gay, St. John and Arbuthnot; a stone's throw off the still more celebrated gothic toy-shop Strawberry Hill, which we all know so well from the minute and vivid descriptions of its master, the most amusing of letter-writers, the most fashionable of antiquaries, the most learned of petit-maitres, the cynical finical delightful Horace Walpole; here too is Richmond Park, where Jeanie Deans and the Duke of Argyle met Queen Caroline, it has been improved unluckily, and the walk where the interview took place no longer exists. To make some amends, however,—for every thing belonging to those

delicious books assumes the form of historical interest, becomes an actual reality—to compensate for this disappointment, in removing some furniture from an old house in the Town, three portraits were discovered in the wainscot, George the second, a staring likeness, between Lady Suffolk and Queen Caroline. The paintings were the worst of that bad era, but the position of the three, and the recollection of Jeanie Deans was irresistible; those pictures ought never to be separated.

But of all the celebrated villas round Richmond, none pleased me better than one which seemed so unsuited to that gay scene, that one cannot look at it without wondering how it came there. I speak of Ham House, a stately old place retired from the river, which is concealed and divided from it by rows of huge trees.

Ham House is a perfect model of the mansion of the last century, with its dark shadowy front, its steps and terraces, its marble basins, and its deep silent court, whose iron gate, as Horace Walpole used to complain, was never opened. Every thing about it belongs to the time of hoops and periwigs. Harlow Place must have been just such an abode of stateliness and seclusion. Those iron gates seem to have been erected for no other purpose than to divide Lovelace from Clarissa; they look so stern and so unrelenting. We almost ex-

pect to see her through them sweeping slowly along the terrace walk in the pure dignity of her swan-like beauty, with her jealous sister watching her from a window, and we look for him, too, at the corner of the wall waiting to deposit a letter and listening with a speaking eagerness to the rustle of her silk gown. If there were any Clarissas now-a-days they would certainly be found at Ham House. And the keeping is so perfect. The very flowers are old fashioned. No American borders, no kalmias or azaleas or magnolias, or such heathen shrubs! No flimsy China roses! Nothing new fangled! None but flowers of the olden time, arranged in gay formal knots, staid and prim and regular, and without a leaf awry. Add but round Dutch honey-suckles and I dare say that Fletcher's beautiful song, which I shall borrow to conclude my description, might comprise the whole catalogue.

“ Roses their sharp spines being gone,
Not royal in their smell alone
But in their hue;
Virgin pinks of odours faint,
Daisies smell-less but most quaint,
And sweet Thyme true.

Primrose, first born child of Ver
Merry spring time's harbinger,

With her bells dim,
Oxslips in their cradles growing,
Marigolds on death-beds blowing,
* Lark-heels trim."

* Of course the flower that we now call larkspur. I have attributed this charming song (the bridal song from the *Two Noble Kinsmen*) to Fletcher;—but it may belong to a still greater poet, for certainly Shakspeare was art and part in that beautiful tragedy.

GHOST STORIES.

SUPERSTITION has fallen woefully into decay in our enlightened country. Sunday schools and spinning jennies, steam engines, and Mac Adam roads, to say nothing of that mightiest and most diffusive of all powers, the Press, have chased away the spirit of credulity, as ghosts are said to be scared by the dawn, so that if a second Sir Thomas Browne were to appear amongst us we should be forced to send him to Germany for that class of "Vulgar Errors," the old saws and nursery legends, which once formed a sort of supplement to the national faith, an apocrypha as ancient and as general as our language. Not only have we discarded the more gross and gloomy creations of an ignorant fear, the wizards, witches and dæmons of the middle ages, but we have also divested ourselves of the more genial and everyday phantasies, the venerable and conventional errors—pleasant mistakes at least if mistakes they were—which succeeded to them. Who now hails his good

fortune if he meet two magpies, or bewails his evil destiny if he see but one? Who is in or out of spirits according as the concave cinder which does him the honour to jump from the fire on his foot be long or round—a coffin or a purse? Who looks in the candles for expected letters, or searches the tea-cups for coming visitors? Who shrinks from being helped to salt as if one were offering him arsenic, or is wretched if a knife and fork be laid across his plate? Who if his neighbour chance to sneeze thinks it a bounden duty to cry God bless him? Who tells his dreams o'mornings, and observes that they come true by contraries? Who, now that Sir Walter disclaims it, hath faith in the stars? Nobody.

It was not so sixty or seventy years ago. Then the nation was a believing nation, and the world was a believing world. Even Frederick and his philosophical court (I mean him of Prussia called the Great) held, if we may trust M. Thiébault's very amusing book "*Mes Souvenirs*" as comfortable a share of these minor articles of faith as their more orthodox neighbours. M. de Kleist for instance and a whole band of young spendthrifts ruined themselves by Alchemy, which they pursued with the assistance of an adept, with sacrifices to the devil and as many suffumigations as Dousterswivel; the Marquis d'Argens had the infirmity of not enduring to be one of thirteen at table;

M. Laméthrie a professed atheist crossed himself like a good Catholic whenever it thundered or was likely to thunder; the princess Amelia, as staunch a philosopher as the best of them, believed *tout de bon* in fortune-telling and astrology; the queen Ulrica of Sweden, another of Frederick's sisters, lent herself to the miracles of Emmanuel Swedenborg; * and the great king himself is violently suspected of sharing the fortune-telling faith of his sister Amelia, and even of suffering the predictions with which she furnished him to influence the conduct of his warlike operations.

Now without pretending to compete with this right royal superstition, inasmuch as I neither regulate my actions by fortune-tellers, nor believe that dead men are in the habit of holding conversations with the living—except perhaps sometimes in books, I must yet plead guilty to a few old fashioned irrationalities, half of

* Mes Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjour à Berlin. Tome II. pages 111, et 285. M. Thiebault talking of Swedenborg relates a curious story of a conversation which that visionary held, or pretended to hold with a certain dead Baron, whose wife being much pestered by a creditor whom she knew to be paid, commissioned Swedenborg to enquire of the defunct what he had done with the receipt. The deceased Baron replied that being engaged in reading Bayle at the moment the paper was delivered to him, he had placed it between the leaves of such a volume at such a page, and the receipt was found there accordingly. This story much resembles Wandering Willy's tale in Redgauntlet, and was perhaps the origin of that fine legend.

theory, and half of practice. There is no analysing a folly of this sort, it runs away when one attempts to clutch it like a drop of quicksilver ; but it is easily defined by instances. I had rather not spill the salt for example, unless I can slily throw a pinch over my left shoulder ; and I had rather not see the new moon through a window ; and I have gone all day with a stocking the wrong side without rather than forfeit the good fortune attributed to that lucky accident by turning my hose ; and although not generally addicted to the consulting of small oracles, such as the Virgilian lots and cards and so forth, yet I can so far sympathise with the feeling as to understand why, during his exile in Siberia, poor Kotzebue (those Germans are pretty believers) used to play by himself every night at la grande patience, and go to bed hopeful or despairing according as he had won or lost at his solitary game. Not that I have any real faith in such nonsense either — be sure to remember that courteous reader—nothing like a real genuine honest faith—only a sort of sneaking kindness for the old foolery—besides one likes to meet with it now and then as a rarity, to sympathize with or laugh at according to circumstances.

This is a pleasure that seldom falls in my way. We have the ill luck to live in a very polished neighbourhood near a large manufacturing town, not far from London, and with a great road running through the

village. We have a Free School of our own ; and a National School, and a Lancasterian School close at hand ; a public house where they take in two newspapers, and a parish clerk who reads Cobbett. In a word we are a civilised people, I grieve to say it, a generation of wiseacres. At present we have not credulity enough amongst us to maintain a Gipsy fortune-teller. My observations of this sort are all retrospective ;—nothing better than recollections, dating at least twenty years back, before the lightning of universal education (for really it did burst upon us like a storm) had astonished and illuminated the world.

The last true believer of my acquaintance was a young farmer called Peter Hodges, who having luckily had a father before him was well to do in the world, and was at the particular period of which I speak, (somewhere about Candlemass-tide in the year nine,) paying suit and service to the fair Kate Butler, daughter of old Simon Butler the bricklayer of Aberleigh, and one of the prettiest girls in the parish.

Now Peter was of that order of suitors with whom fathers are generally better pleased than their daughters, especially when those fathers are, as was the case with our good mason, thrifty and cautious, and mindful of the main chance, and the daughters like Kate thoughtless and open-hearted. He, Peter Hodges, was a tall lathy awkward figure, with a boyish—I had almost

said a girlish—countenance, fair pale and freckled, an expression so remarkably vacant and simple that nobody could see him without being tempted to ask Macbeth's uncivil question "Where got'st thou that goose look?" His motion was weak and shambling; as if his long thin limbs were unable to support his long thin body. Even his straight light hair stuck up and stuck out and waved abroad with a flickering motion, like flax upon a distaff, adding ten-fold to the helpless silliness of his aspect. Silly he looked, and silly he was; so silly that in conversation, as his fair mistress was wont to assert, the very magpie had the advantage of him, inasmuch as she when a stranger said, "How d'ye do Mag?" would answer "What's that to you Sir!" whereas Peter when thus addressed only opened his mouth and stared, and said nothing.

No such accusation could be brought against Kate, a lively spirited girl, whose beauty owed half its reputation to the quickness of mind and the light and joyous temperament, which danced in her eyes, played in her smiles, and gave a singular charm to the mingled archness and innocence of her rustic merriment. Kate had plenty to say for herself at all times, and was in truth almost equally agreeable to look at or to listen to.

So unluckily thought Peter Hodges. Every evening through the winter, from Michaelmas to New-year's

day, and from New-year's day to Candlemas, did that indefatigable suitor present himself at the Mason's cottage, until Dame Butler, whose domestic economy had at first been a good deal discomposed by the honor of the young farmer's visits, began from mere habit to mind him no more than a joint stool, and till poor Kate grew so weary of the sight of him, that she used to lock herself into her own little room and go to bed without her supper, purely to get out of his way.

Now this was an affront which our imperturbable suitor bore with exemplary patience; but for which the contumacious damsel received sundry serious reproofs from her good father, the little mason; who reminded her that not only did farmer Hodges take the trouble to walk two miles every night to look at her baby-face, but that it was not many persons who would like to pass the Nursery corner of a dark winter's night. "I never saw any thing there myself," continued master Butler, "but all the parish knows it's haunted, and my grandmother, rest her soul! got strangely scared there, in her younger days, by a ghost all in white, and of a surprising stature. The farmer thought he saw it last night," added the man of mortar; "he came in quite frustrated like, with his hair right on end upon his head, and making as much noise with his breath, as you are doing with those bellows,—as if coals did not burn out fast enough, without such waste-

fulness," added the angry father, passing with great rapidity from one subject of objurgation to another ; " the fire's a good fire, and nobody but an extravagant hussy would think of blowing it after that fashion."

" Mother ordered me to heat the irons," replied the culprit meekly ; " but did Farmer Hodges really see the ghost, father ? Do you think it was the ghost ? Did you see any signs of it ?"

" Why no," responded the little Mason ; " I can't say that I did. I took my hat down from the nail, and set out to see, but just at our gate I met young Joe Appleton of the mill—I wonder what he was doing about here so late," muttered the knight of the hod, again flying from his subject and casting a keen glance at his daughter, who blushed and fidgeted and busied herself in laying down the irons before the fire, and at last spoke timidly.

" But the ghost, father ? Had he seen the ghost ?"

" He ? no ! He said, if there's any truth in the chap, that the only thing to be seen at the Nursery corner, when he came by, was Hester Hewit's white cow, looking over a gate. What's the silly baggage laughing at now ?" added the provoked father still more testily. " If Farmer Hodges gets another such fright, I should not wonder at his flying the country altogether, or taking up with that bouncing gawky wench Madge Jenkins—She'd be glad enough to marry him.—There's not a man in Aberleigh better to pass in the world ; and

he to slip through our fingers from a silly jade's perverseness ! It's enough to drive one beside oneself,"—and off walked the little Mason, muttering as he went, " I can't think what business Joe Appleton had about my place last night ; if I catch him there again I'll trounce him."

Kate watched her father out with eyes dancing, cheeks dimpling, and her whole countenance lighted up with merriment and pleasure. " So ! he's afraid of the Nursery corner ?" thought the saucy damsel to herself ; and then with a transition almost as rapid as those which rushed through the mind of the man of bricks,—“ Poor Joe Appleton !” thought she, “ he's not of a sort to be trounced or frightened by ghost or mortal ! To think of his coming into father's way though ! Well !” sighed the pretty maiden ; “ well !” and with that philosophical exclamation, and a shake of the head as comprehensive as Lord Burleigh's, she proceeded in her preparation for the ironing.

The Nursery corner was, to say truth, as suitable a spot for a ghost to abide in as heart could desire. It was an old three-cornered, straggling plantation of dark dismal Scotch firs ; and was surrounded on the sides next the road by decayed park-paling, through the gaps in which were seen patches of wild underwood, and half-dead furze-bushes, intersecting the withered grass which grew at the foot of the trees. This irre-

gular and melancholy collection of rugged and dingy ever-greens occupied the corner where a narrow, winding, gloomy lane, which led to the more populous part of the Village, turned somewhat suddenly into a small wild common, on the skirts of which stood the mason's neat dwelling, a cottage of his own erection, with an ample garnishing of out-houses, and pigstyes, and a tolerable garden cribbed from the waste.

Every old woman had a legend upon the subject, of which there were as many different versions as there were speakers, and every child shrank from passing the haunted corner; but neither Kate nor her father or mother had ever seen the spectre, although such near neighbours to his ghostship. None of them had ever seen the apparition; and such is the force of habit, that, sooth to say, they thought little of the matter. Master Butler, indeed, occasionally mentioned the story with some respect; partly out of veneration to his deceased grandmother, of blessed memory, of whom the ghost might in some sort be accounted the personal, or rather the impersonal acquaintance; partly because the fear of the apparition served every now and then as an affectionate and plausible pretext to keep his woman-kind at home after sunset; though I cannot discover that his awe of the supernatural was ever allowed to interfere with his own hebdomadal visits to the Saturday night's club at the Rose.

The night following the adventure of the white cow, a small party were assembled in the tap-room of that respectable hostelry, enjoying the warmth and brightness of a clear wood fire, all the more for its contrast with the frosty air without, for the spring was backward, and the evening cold. It was not a club night, and after two or three labourers had had their pint, and departed, the company consisted of an old Chelsea Pensioner, a relique of the American war, and a man of importance in the village, being as battered and as good-humoured a veteran as ever smoked a pipe; of Jem the keeper; and Will the blacksmith; and lastly, of the jolly host and his comely wife.

The well-thumbed county paper had been honestly gone through by this select party; who had discussed past debates, and coming assizes, lists of births, deaths, and marriages; two murders, a battle, and a great chancery suit, with a good deal of local intelligence by way of interlude,—all seasoned by certain piquant remarks of the pensioner, a joker by profession, and a privileged man amongst high and low, who liked the old red coat, some-deal the worse for wear, the empty sleeve, the long venerable white locks, the weather-beaten cheek, and the expression “civil but sly” of his bright blue eyes, and merry but withered countenance. A pause had ensued in their “country cracks,” when Jem the keeper, a coxcomb in his way, pulled out his handsome

watch and seals with the self-satisfied air that betokens a new acquisition, and starting as he proclaimed the hour, declared "that he could not stay another minute for that wild chap, Joe Appleton. He must be going home; and if the mad Miller called at the Rose, they must tell him that he had waited till he could wait no longer, and was gone. He could not tell what was come to Joe Appleton. He had not seen him he did not know when, till the morning before, and then he made the appointment, which he had broken now. He could not imagine what was come to him!"

"Pray were you ever in love, Jem?" asked the veteran, laying his hand on the keeper's shoulder as he passed him.

"In love! Oh yes!—No!—I believe not—I can't tell," replied the keeper, repenting the frankness of his first avowal, and trying to retract his confession.

"Stick to your first answer, my boy," said the old soldier, "that's the true one. You have been in love yourself, and therefore can give a shrewd guess at what ails Joe Appleton. The poor lad's in love too."

"Aye, with pretty Kate of the Nursery corner," quoth mine hostess.

"Her father says she's to marry long Peter Hodges," rejoined mine host. "But in Heaven's name what's that?" added he, interrupting himself, and going towards the door, at which some one was knocking with a most

prodigious din. "Who's that beating at the good oak panels as if he would beat them out?" continued the astonished landlord, undoing the lock, and admitting the clamorous applicant, who staggered faintly towards the group at the fire-place.

"Why, farmer Hodges! was it you that made this clatter? I thought you had been a quieter body," said the Pensioner; "What's the matter, man? I did not think it had been in him to make so much noise. He looks quite scared," added the veteran.

And Peter, his hair on end, and his face whiter than his shirt, sank into a low wicker chair by the fire, and began rocking himself to and fro, as if he were nursing a baby.

"He looks for all the world as if he had seen a ghost," pursued the old man.

And Peter started and looked round him, as if he saw it then.

"Where was it, lad? At the Nursery corner?"

And Peter's teeth chattered at the sound.

"Ah, they are sad things, those ghosts," continued the veteran, as Peter rejecting the ale offered to him by the host, and the brandy tendered by the hostess, sank back in his wicker chair, looking very likely to faint away. "They are sad things, those ghosts," said the old man in a sympathising tone. "Better not cross them! I had my own troubles in that way, when I

was a youngster. Did you never hear me tell of it, Master Hodges *? If it had not been for that ghost which came across us when I was upon guard in America, I should have saved General Prescott from being taken, and have been made a corporal upon the spot. A corporal! by Jove I should have been a general myself by this time, if that confounded ghost story had not come over me and stopped my preferment. Ghosts are plaguy things any how, especially if you cross them."

"What! did you ever see a ghost in America? a real ghost?" said a voice from behind, and Joe Appleton, who had entered unperceived in the bustle, advanced towards the veteran; "a real, actual, bona fide ghost?"

"Why should not I as well as he!" replied our scarlet friend. Then looking at Joe more closely, "Ah! Ah! man! I see how it is now! you have been playing the ghost yonder yourself, for the sake of your pretty sweetheart;" added he in a whisper, regarding the miller's hat, jacket, and trousers, all white with the flour of the mill, and catching hold of a bundle which he held under his arm. "I see how it is! And I'll take care of Kate's sheet—it is her's, I suppose?" Joe nodded. "And do you wipe the flour from your face and go your ways with Jem the keeper,

* Vide note at the end of the story.

for though yon body's well nigh stupified with the fright, its better to run no risk. And now they're getting him to drink the brandy, what sense he has will come back again. Did I see a ghost, boy?" pursued the old man, as he was letting Joe Appleton out of the house door; "Did I see a ghost in America? Aye, just such an one as Master Hodges has seen to night! Just such an one as thyself, my lad! Get along with ye, and leave me to frighten long Peter out of passing the Nursery corner; Kate's too good, and too pretty for him, if he were as rich again," continued the old man to himself as he joined the luckless farmer (who sat still half unconscious by the fire-side) and applied himself seriously to the business of consolation and mystification, taking upon him to compound two tumblers of stiff toddy, and so ordering his discourse whilst discussing them, that Peter left the Rose more certain that he had seen a ghost than he was when he entered it, and declared that he would never pass the Nursery corner again for love or money.

In about a twelvemonth young Joe Appleton of the mill married the Mason's pretty daughter with the consent of all parties; and in spite of the ups and downs of life, which they have shared with their neighbours, neither of them has, I believe, ever found cause to repent their union. The good old Pensioner is dead; Long Peter is gone away; and the world is grown so wise, that the

very children laugh at the terrors of the Nursery corner; and it would be impossible for a village maiden to frighten away a disagreeable lover by a ghost story now—even if she had Mrs. Radcliffe's genius for the romantic and the horrible.

NOTE.—The following characteristic and national narrative contains the American version of the Ghost Story in question. The remarkable facts attending the capture of General Prescott are certainly true, being attested not only by my friend the veteran, but corroborated by some near relations of that brave officer, who remember the story as current in the family. It appears to have been one of those daring exploits which succeed by their own exceeding boldness, and are practicable only because they appear impossible. Certainly if the notion of a ghost had not come across the English sentinel, the American adventurers would have had the worst of the fray.

Narrative of the Surprise and Capture of Maj. Gen. Richard Prescott, of the British Army, together with his Aid-de-camp, Maj. Barrington, by a party of American soldiers, under Maj. Wm. Barton, July 9, 1777.

In the month of November, 1776, Major General Lee was surprised and taken prisoner by a detachment of British troops.—With a view to procure the exchange of that valuable officer, William Barton, then a Major in the Rhode-Island line, in the service of the continental Congress, and one of the most daring and patriotic soldiers of the revolution, projected the bold and adventurous expedition which is the subject of the following narrative.

Some months elapsed, after the capture of General Lee, before an opportunity offered of effecting the object which Major Barton had in view. In the month following that of the capture of General Lee, the enemy took possession of the Islands of Rhode Island, Canonicut, and Prudence. Major Barton was then stationed at Tiverton; and for some months anxiously watched the motions of the enemy, with but feeble prospect of obtaining the opportunity he desired. At length, on the 20th June, 1777, a man of the name of Coffin, who made his escape from the British, was seized by some of the American troops, and carried to Major Barton's quarters. Major Barton availed himself of the opportunity to inquire respecting the disposition of the British forces. Coffin, on examination, stated that General Prescott had established his headquarters on the west side of Rhode Island, and described minutely the situation of the house in which he resided, which he said was owned by Mr. Pering. His account was a few days afterwards corroborated by a deserter from the ranks of the enemy.—Major Barton was now confirmed in his belief of the practicability of effecting his favourite object—but serious obstacles were first to be encountered and removed.—Neither his troops nor their commander had been long inured to service; and the intended enterprise was of a nature as novel as it was hazardous. Besides, Major Barton was aware that the undertaking, should it prove unsuccessful, would be pronounced rash and unadvised, and in its consequences, though his life should be preserved, would be followed by degradation and disgrace. Moreover, to involve in the consequences of an enterprise, devised and undertaken without previous consultation with his superiors in rank, the interest and perhaps the lives of a portion of his brave countrymen, was a subject that excited reflections calculated to damp the ardor and appal the courage of the bravest minds. Still, however, upon ma-

ture reflection, aided by a consciousness that his only motive was the interest of his country, he resolved to hazard his reputation and life in the attempt.

The regiment to which Major Barton was attached was commanded by Colonel Stanton, a respectable and wealthy farmer in Rhode Island, who, in the spirit of the times, had abandoned the culture of his farm, and the care of his family, and put at hazard his property and his life, in defence of his country. To this gentleman Major Barton communicated his plan, and solicited permission to carry it into execution. Colonel Stanton readily authorized him "to attack the enemy when and where he pleased." Several officers in the confidence of Major Barton were then selected from the regiment, for the intended expedition, on whose abilities and bravery he could rely: these were Captain Samuel Philips, Lieutenant James Porter, Lieutenant Joshua Babcock, Ensign Andrew Stanton, and John Wilcox, (Capt. — Adams subsequently volunteered his services, and took an active part in the enterprise). These gentlemen were informed by Major Barton that he had in contemplation an enterprise which would be attended with great personal hazard to himself and his associates; but which, if success attended it, would be productive of much advantage to the country. Its particular object, he stated, would be seasonably disclosed to them. It was at their option to accept or decline his invitation to share with him in the dangers, and, as he trusted, in the glory that would attend the undertaking. The personal bravery of Major Barton had been previously tested; and such was the esteem and confidence which he had acquired among the officers under his command, that without insisting upon a previous developement of his plans, his proposal was immediately accepted.—Major Barton experienced more difficulty in obtaining the necessary number of boats, as there were but two

in the vicinity. But this difficulty, though it caused a few days' delay, was at length obviated, and five whale boats were procured and equipped for service. Major Barton had purposely postponed procuring the necessary number of men until the last moment, from an apprehension that their earlier selection might excite suspicion, and defeat the object of their enterprise. Desirous that his little band might be composed entirely of volunteers, the whole regiment was now ordered upon parade. In a short but animated address, Major Barton informed the soldiers that he projected an expedition against the enemy, which could be effected only by the heroism and bravery of those who should attend him; that he desired the voluntary assistance of about forty of their number, and directed those "who would hazard their lives in the enterprise to advance two paces in front." Without *one exception or a moment's hesitation* the *whole* regiment advanced.—Major Barton, after bestowing upon the troops the applause they merited, and stating that he required the aid of but a small portion of their number, commenced upon the right, and, passing along the lines, selected from the regiment, to the number of thirty-six, those who united to bravery and discipline a competent knowledge of seamanship for the management of the boats. Having thus obtained an adequate number of officers and men, and every thing being ready, the party on the 4th of July, 1777, embarked from Tiverton for Bristol. While crossing Mount Hope Bay, there arose a severe storm of thunder and rain, which separated three boats from that of their commander. The boat containing Major Barton, and one other, arrived at Bristol soon after midnight. Major Barton proceeded to the quarters of the commanding officer, where he found a deserter who had just made his escape from the enemy at Rhode Island. From this man he learned that there had been no alteration for the last few days in the

position of the British. On the morning of the 5th, the remaining boats having arrived, Major Barton with his officers went to Hog Island, not far distant from Bristol, and within view of the British encampment and shipping. It was at this place that he disclosed to his officers the particular object of the enterprise, his reasons for attempting it, and the part each was to perform. Upon reconnoitring the position of the enemy, it was thought impracticable, without great hazard of capture, to proceed directly from Bristol to the head-quarters of the British general. It was determined, therefore, to make *Warwick Neck*, a place opposite to the British encampment, but at a greater distance than Bristol, the point from which they should depart immediately for Rhode Island. The most inviolable secrecy was enjoined upon his officers by Major Barton, and the party returned to Bristol.

On the evening of the 6th, about nine o'clock, the little squadron again sailed, and, crossing Naraganset Bay, landed on Warwick Neck. On the 7th, the wind changing to E. N. E. brought on a storm, and retarded their plan. On the 9th, the weather being pleasant, it was determined to embark for the Island. The boats were now numbered, and the place of every officer and soldier assigned. At 9 o'clock in the evening Major Barton assembled his party around him, and in an address, in which were mingled the feelings of the soldier and the man, he disclosed to them the object of the enterprise. He did not attempt to conceal the danger and difficulties that would inevitably attend the undertaking: nor did he forget to remind them, that should their efforts be followed by success, they would be entitled to, and would receive, the grateful acknowledgments of their country. "It is probable," said he, "that some of us may not survive the daring attempt; but I ask you to hazard no dangers which will not be *shared* with you by your commander;

and I pledge you my honor, that in every difficulty and danger I will take the lead." He received the immediate and unanimous assurance of the whole party, that they would follow, wherever their beloved commander should lead them. Major Barton then reminding them how much the success of the enterprise depended upon their strict attention to orders, directed that each individual should confine himself to his particular seat in the boat assigned him, and that not a syllable should be uttered by any one. He instructed them, as they regarded their character as patriots and soldiers, that in the hour of danger they should be firm, collected, and resolved fearlessly to encounter the dangers and difficulties that might assail them. He concluded by offering his fervent petition to the Great King of Armies, that he would smile upon their intended enterprise, and crown it with success. The whole party now proceeded to the shore.—Major Barton had reason to apprehend that he must be discovered in his passage from the main to Rhode Island, by some of the ships of war that lay at a small distance from the shore. He therefore directed the commanding officer of the port at Warwick Neck, that if he heard the report of *three* distinct muskets, to send the boats to the North end of Prudence Island to his aid. The whole party now took possession of the boats in the manner directed. That which contained Major Barton was posted in front, with a pole about ten feet long in her stern, to the end of which was attached a handkerchief, in order that his boat might be distinguished from the others, that none might go before it. In this manner they proceeded between the Islands of Prudence and Patience, in order that they might not be seen by the shipping of the enemy that lay off against Hope Island.—While passing the north end of Prudence Island, they heard from the sentinels on board the shipping of the enemy the cry of "all's well." As they approached the shore of

Rhode Island, a noise like the running of horses was heard, which threw a momentary consternation over the minds of the whole party; but in strict conformity to the orders issued, not a word was spoken by any one. A moment's reflection satisfied Major Barton of the utter impossibility that his designs could be known by the enemy, and *he pushed boldly for the shore*. Apprehensive that if discovered the enemy might attempt to cut off his retreat, Major Barton ordered one man to remain in each boat and be prepared for departure at a moment's warning. The remainder of the party landed without delay. The reflections of Major Barton at this interesting moment were of a nature the most painful. The lapse of a few hours would place him in a situation in the highest degree gratifying to his ambition, or overwhelm him in the ruin in which his rashness would involve him. In the solemn silence of the night, and on the shores of the enemy, he paused a moment to consider a plan which had been projected and matured amidst the bustle of a camp, and in a place of safety. The night was excessively dark; and a stranger to the country, his sole reliance upon a direct and expeditious movement to the head-quarters of the British General, so essential to success, rested upon the imperfect information he had acquired from deserters from the enemy! Should he surprise and secure General Prescott, he was aware of the difficulties that would attend his conveyance to the boat; the probability of an early and fatal discovery of his design by the troops on the Island; and even should he succeed in reaching the boats, it was by no means improbable that the alarm might be seasonably given to the shipping, to prevent his retreat to the main. But regardless of circumstances, which even then would have afforded an apology for a hasty retreat, he resolved at all hazards to attempt the accomplishment of his design.

To the head-quarters of General Prescott, about a mile from

the shore, the party, in five divisions, now proceeded in silence. There was a door on the south, the east, and west sides of the house in which he resided. The first division was ordered to advance upon the south door, the second on the west, and the third on the east, the fourth to guard the road, and the fifth to act on emergencies. In their march they passed the guard-house of the enemy, on their left, and on their right a house occupied by a company of cavalry, for the purpose of carrying with expedition the orders of the general to remote parts of the Island. On arriving at the head-quarters of the enemy, as the gate of the front yard was opened they were challenged by the sentinel on guard. The party was at the distance of about twenty-five yards from the sentinel, but a row of trees partially concealed them from his view, and prevented him from determining their number. No reply was made to the challenge of the sentinel, and the party proceeded on in silence. The sentinel again demanded, "Who comes there?" "Friends," replied Barton. "Friends," said the sentinel, "advance and give the countersign."

Major Barton, affecting to be angry, said to the sentinel, who was now near him, "D— you, we have no countersign—have you seen any rascals to night?" and before the sentinel could determine the character of those who approached him, Major Barton had seized his musket, told him he was a prisoner, and threatened in case of noise or resistance to put him to instant death. The poor fellow was so terrified, that upon being demanded if his general was in the house, he was, for some time, unable to give any answer. At length, in a faltering voice, he replied that he was. By this time each division having taken its station, the south door was burst open by the direction of Major Barton, and the division there stationed, with their commander at their head, rushed into the head-quarters of the general. At this critical moment, one of the

British soldiers effected his escape and fled to the quarters of the main guard. This man had no article of clothing upon him but a shirt, and having given the alarm to the sentinel on duty, passed on to the quarters of the cavalry, which was more remote from the head-quarters of the general. The sentinel roused the main guard, who were instantly in arms and demanded the cause of the alarm. He stated the information which had been given him by the soldier, which appeared so incredible to the sergeant of the guard, that he insisted he had seen a ghost. The sentinel, to whom the account of his general's capture appeared quite as incredible as to his commanding officer, admitted that the messenger was clothed in white; and after submitting to the jokes of his companions as a punishment for his credulity, was ordered to resume his station, while the remainder of the guard retired to their quarters. It was fortunate for Major Barton and his brave followers, that the alarm given by the soldier was considered groundless. Had the main guard proceeded without delay to the relief of their commanding general, his rescue certainly, and probably the destruction of the party would have been the consequence.

The first room Major Barton entered was occupied by Mr. Pering, who positively denied that General Prescott was in his house. He next entered the room of his son, who was equally obstinate with his father in denying that the General was there. Major Barton then proceeded to other apartments but was still disappointed in the object of his search. Aware that longer delay might defeat the object of his enterprise, Major Barton resorted to stratagem to facilitate his search. Placing himself at the head of the stair-way, and declaring his resolution to secure the General dead or alive, he ordered his soldiers to set fire to the house. The soldiers were preparing to execute his orders, when a voice which Major Barton at once suspected to be the General's, demanded

what's the matter. Major Barton rushed to the apartment from whence the voice proceeded, and discovered an elderly man just rising from his bed, and clapping his hands upon his shoulder, demanded of him if he was General Prescott. He answered, "Yes sir." "You are my prisoner, then," said Major Barton. "I acknowledge that I am," said the General. In a moment General Prescott found himself half-dressed, in the arms of the soldiers, who hurried him from the house. In the mean time Major Barrington, the aid to General Prescott, discovering that the house was attacked by the *rebels*, as the enemy termed them, leaped the window of his bed chamber, and was immediately secured a prisoner. General Prescott, supported by Major Barton and one of his officers, and attended by Major Barrington and the sentinel, proceeded, surrounded by the soldiery, to the shore. Upon seeing the five little boats, General Prescott, who knew the position of the British shipping, appeared much confused, and turning to Major Barton enquired if he commanded the party. On being informed that he did, he expressed a hope that no personal injury was intended him, and Major Barton assured the General of his protection while he remained under his control.

The General had travelled from head-quarters to the shore in his waistcoat, small-clothes and slippers. A moment was now allowed him to complete his dress, while the party were taking possession of the boats. The general was placed in the boat with Major Barton, as they proceeded for the main.

They had not got far from the Island, when the discharge of cannon, and three sky-rockets gave the signal for alarm. It was fortunate for the party that the enemy on board the shipping were ignorant of the cause of it, who might easily have cut off their retreat. The signal of alarm excited the apprehensions of Major Barton and his brave associates, and redoubled their exertions to

reach the point of their destination before they could be discovered. They succeeded, and soon after day-break landed at Warwick-neck, near the point of their departure, after an absence of *six hours and a half*.

General Prescott turned towards the Island, and observing the ships of war, remarked to Major Barton, "Sir, you have made a bold push to-night."—"We have been fortunate," replied the hero. An express was immediately sent forward to Major General Spencer, to Providence, communicating the success which had attended the enterprize. Not long afterwards, a coach arrived which had been dispatched by General Spencer to convey General Prescott and his aid-de-camp prisoners for Providence. They were accompanied by Major Barton, who related to General Spencer, on their arrival, the particulars of the enterprise, and received from that officer the most grateful acknowledgments for the signal services he had rendered his country.

MATTHEW SHORE.

NEXT in beauty to the view over the Loddon at Aberleigh, is that from Lanton Bridge up and down the clear and winding Kennet, and this present season (the latter end of April) is perhaps the time of year which displays to the greatest advantage that fine piece of pastoral scenery. And yet it is a species of beauty difficult to convey to the reader. There is little to describe but much to feel ; the sweet and genial repose of the landscape, harmonises so completely with the noon-tide sunshine and the soft balmy air. The river, bright and glassy, glides in beautiful curves through a rich valley of meadow land, the view on one side of the bridge terminating at the distance of a couple of miles by the picturesque town of B. with its old towers and spires, whilst on the other the stream seems gradually to lose itself amongst the richly wooded and finely undulating grounds of Lanton Park.

But it is in the meadows themselves that the real

charm is to be found : the fresh sprouting grass, bordered with hedge-rows just putting on their tenderest green, dotted with wild patches of willow trees, and clumps of noble elms, gay with the golden marsh marigold and the elegant fritillary * ; alive with bees and butterflies, and the shining tribe of water insects ; and musical with the notes of a countless variety of birds, who cease singing or whom we cease to listen to (it comes exactly to the same thing) the moment the nightingale begins her matchless song. Here and there too, farm-houses and cottages, half hidden by cherry orchards just in their fullest bloom, come cranking into the meadows ; and farther in the distance chimney tops with curling wreathes of blue smoke, or groupes of poplar, never seen but near dwellings, give a fresh interest to the picture by the unequivocal signs of human habitation and human sympathy.

In one of the nearest of these poplar clumps—not above half a mile off, if it were possible for any creature except a bird to pass the wide deep ditches which intersect these water meadows, but which, by thridding the narrow and intricate lanes that form the only practicable route, we contrive to make nearly six times as

* The country people call this beautiful plant the Turkey-egg flower, and indeed the chequered pendant blossoms do, both in their shape and in their mottled tinting, bear some resemblance to the dappled eggs of that stately bird.

long ; in that island of spiral poplars and gigantic fruit trees, with one corner of the roof just peeping amongst the blossomy cherry boughs, stands the comfortable abode of my good friend Matthew Shore to whose ample farm a large portion of these rich meadows forms an appendage of no trifling value.

Matthew is of an old yeomanry family, who have a pedigree of their own, and are as proud of having been for many generations the hereditary tenants of the owners of Lanton Park, as they themselves may be of having been for more centuries than I choose to mention the honoured possessors of that fair estate. Excellent landlords, and excellent tenants, both parties are, I believe, equally pleased with the connection, and would no more think of dissolving the union, which time and mutual service have cemented so closely, than of breaking through the ties of near relationship ; although my friend Matthew, having no taste for agricultural pursuits, his genius for the cultivation of land having broken out in a different line, has devolved on his younger brother Andrew the entire management and superintendence of the farm.

Matthew and Andrew Shore are as unlike as two brothers well can be in all but their strong manly affection for each other, and go on together all the better for their dissimilarity of taste and character. Andrew is a bluff frank merry Benedict, blest in a comely bustling

wife, and five rosy children; somewhat too loud and boisterous in his welcomings, which come upon one like a storm, but delightful in his old fashioned hospitality and his hearty good-humour; for the rest, a good master, a steady friend, a jovial neighbour, and the best farmer and most sagacious dealer to be found in the country side. He must be a knowing hand who takes in Andrew Shore. He is a bold rider too, when the fox-hounds happen to come irresistibly near; and is famous for his breed of cocking spaniels, and for constantly winning the yeomanry cup at the B. coursing meeting. Such is our good neighbour Farmer Shore.

His wife is not a little like her husband; a laughing, bustling, good-humoured woman, famous for the rearing of turkeys and fattening of calves, ruling the servants and children within doors, with as absolute a discretion as that with which he sways the out-door sceptre, and complaining occasionally of the power she likes so well, and which, with an ingratitude not uncommon in such cases, she is pleased to call trouble. In spite of these complaints, however, she is one of the happiest women in the parish, being amongst the very few who are neither troubled by poverty or finery—the twin pests of the age and country. Her expences are those of her grandmother's days; she has fourteen-shilling hyson, and double refined sugar for any friend who may drop in to tea, and a handsome silk gown to

wear to Church on Sundays. An annual jaunt to Ascot is all her dissipation, and a taxed cart her sole equipage. Well may Mrs. Shore be a happy woman.

The only spot about the place sacred from her authority, is that which I am come to visit,—the garden; my friend Matthew's territory, in which he spends all his days, and half his nights, and which, in spite of his strong fraternal affection, he certainly loves better than brother or sister, nephew or niece, friend or comrade; better in short than he loves any thing else under the sun.

Matthew is an old batchelor of fifty-five, or there-away, with a quick eye, a ruddy cheek, a delightful benevolence of countenance, a soft voice and a gentle manner. He is just what he seems, the kindest, the most generous and the best natured creature under the sun, the universal friend and refuge of servants, children, paupers, and delinquents of all descriptions, who fly to him for assistance and protection in every emergency, and would certainly stun him with their clamorous importunity, if he were not already as deaf as a post.

Matthew is one of the few very deaf people worth talking to. He is what is becoming scarcer every day, a florist of the first order, and of the old school,—not exactly of Mr. Evelyn's time* for in the gardening of

* See note at the end of the sketch for a most curious account of the gardens round London in 1691.

that period, although greens were, flowers were not,—but of thirty or forty years back, the reign of pinks, tulips, auriculas, and ranunculuses, when the time and skill of the gardener were devoted to produce, in the highest imaginable perfection, a variety of two or three favoured tribes. The whole of this large garden, for the potatoes and cabbages have been forced to retreat to a nook in the orchard, dug up in their behoof;—the whole ample garden is laid out in long beds, like those in a nursery ground, filled with these precious flowers, of the rarest sorts and in the highest culture; and as I have arrived in the midst the hyacinth, auricula, and anemone season, with the tulips just opening, I may consider myself in great luck to see what is called in gardening language, “so grand a shew.” It is worth something too, to see Matthew’s delight, half compounded of vanity and kindness, as he shews them, mixed with courteous offers of seedlings and offsets, and biographical notices of the more curious flowers: “How the stock of this plant came from that noted florist Tom Bonham, the B. taylor, commonly called tippling Tom, who once refused fifty guineas for three auriculas! and how this tulip was filched” (Matthew tells this in a particularly low and confidential tone) “from a worthy merchant of Rotterdam, by an honest skipper of his acquaintance, who abstracted the root, but left five pounds in the place of it, and afterwards made over the bargain for a couple of

pounds more, just to pay him for the grievous bodily fear which he had undergone between the time of this adventure, for there was no telling how the Burgomaster might relish the bargain, and his embarkation in the good schooner the Race-horse of Liverpool."

Perhaps the tulips, especially this pet root, are on the whole Matthew's favourites ; but he is a great man at pink shews and melon feasts, and his carnations, particularly those of a sort called 'the mount Etna,' which seldom comes to good in other hands, as regularly win the plate as Andrew's greyhounds. It is quite edifying to hear him run over the bead-roll of pink names, from Cleopatra to the Glory of New York. The last mentioned flowers are precisely my object to-day ; for I am come to beg some of his old plants, to the great endangerment of my character, as a woman of taste, I having, sooth to say, no judgment in pinks, except preferring those which are full of bloom, in which quality these old roots, which he was about to fling away, and which he is giving me with a civil reluctance to put any thing so worthless into my garden, greatly excel the young plants of which he is so proud.

Notwithstanding his love for his own names, some of which are fantastical enough, Matthew wages fierce war against the cramp appellations, whether of geraniums or of other plants, introduced latterly, and indeed against all new flowers of every sort whatsoever,

comprehending them all under the general denomination of trash. He contrives to get the best and the rarest, notwithstanding, and to make them blow better than any body, and I would lay a wager—Aye, I am right! the rogue! the rogue! What is that in the window but the cactus speciosissimus, most splendid of flowers, with its large ruby cup and its ivory tassels? It is not in bloom yet, but it is showing strong and coming fast. And is not that fellow the scarlet potentilla? And that the last fuschia? And is there such a plant in the county as that newest of all the new cammellias? Ah the rogue! the rogue! He to abuse my geraniums, and call me new-fangled, with four plants in his windows that might challenge the horticultural! And when I laugh at him about it, he'll pretend not to hear, and follow the example of that other great deaf artist

“Who shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.”

Ah the rogue! the rogue! To think that fickleness should be so engrafted in man's nature, that even Matthew Shore is not able to resist the contagion, but must fall a flirting with cactuses and cammellias—let the pinks and tulips look to it! The rogue! the rogue!

If the fickleness of man were my first thought, the desire to see the cammellia nearer was the second; and Mrs. Shore appearing in the porch with her clean

white apron and her pleasant smile, I followed her through a large, lightsome, bricked apartment, the common room of the family, where the ample hearth, the great chairs in the chimney corner, defended from draughts by green stuff curtains, the massive oak tables, the tall japanned clock, and the huge dresser laden with pewter dishes as bright as silver, gave token of rustic comfort and opulence. Ornaments were not wanting. The dresser was also adorned with the remains of a long preserved set of tea-china, of a light rambling pattern, consisting of five cups and seven saucers, a tea-pot, neatly mended, a pitcher-like cream jug, cracked down the middle, and a sugar bason, wanting a handle; with sundry odd plates, delf, blue, and white, brown-edged, and green-edged, scalloped and plain; and last and choicest with a grand collection of mugs—always the favourite object of housewifely vanity in every rank of rural life, from Mrs. Shore of Lanton-Farm, down to her maid Debby. This collection was of a particularly ambitious nature. It filled a row and a half of the long dresser, graduated according to size, like books in a library, the gallons ranking as folios, the half-pints ranging as duocecimos. Their number made me involuntarily repeat to myself two lines from Anstey's inimitable Pleader's Guide, meant to ridicule the fictions of the law, but here turned into a literal truth.

"First count's for that with divers jugs,
"To wit, twelve pots, twelve cups, twelve mugs"

but these jugs were evidently not meant to be profaned by the "certain vulgar drink called toddy," or any other drink. Half a dozen plain white ones, rather out of condition, which stood on a side table, were clearly the drudges, the working mugs of the family. The ornamental species, the drone mugs hung on nails by their handles, and were of every variety of shape, colour, and pattern. Some of the larger ones were adorned with portraits in medallion—Mr. Wilberforce, Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, and Charles Fox. Some were gay with flowers not very like nature. Some had landscapes in red, and one a group of figures in yellow. Others again, and these were chiefly the blues, had patterns of all sorts of intricacy and involution without any visible meaning. Some had borders of many colours; and some, which looked too genteel for their company, had white cameos relieved on a brown ground. Those drinking vessels were full of the antique elegance and grace. I stood admiring them when Mrs. Shore called me into the parlour, where the plant I wished to see was placed.

The parlour—Oh, how incomparably inferior to the kitchen!—was a little low, square, dark box, into which we were shut by a door, painted black, dimly lighted by a casement window, quite filled by the su-

perb cammellia, and rendered even more gloomy by a dark paper of reds and greens, with an orange border. A piece of furniture called a beaufette, open and displaying a collection of glass ware, almost equal to the pewter for age and brightness, to the mugs for variety, and to the china for joinery, a shining round mahogany table, and six hair-bottomed chairs, really seemed to crowd the little apartment ; but it was impossible to look at any thing except the splendid plant, with its dark shining leaves, and the pure, yet majestic blossoms reposing on the deep verdure, as a pearly coronet on the glossy locks of some young beauty. Ah ! no wonder that the pinks are a little out of favour, or that Matthew stands smiling there in utter oblivion of striped tulip or streaked carnation ! such a plant as this would be an excuse for forgetting the whole vegetable creation, and my good friend Matthew (who always contrives to hear the civil things one says of his flowers, however low one may speak, and who is perfectly satisfied by my admiration on the present occasion) has just made me almost as happy as himself, by promising to rear me one of the same sort, after a method of his own discovering, which he assures me brings them to perfection twice as fast as the dawdling modes of the new school. Nothing like an old gardener after all ! above all if he be as kind, as enthusiastic, and as clever, as my friend Matthew Shore.

NOTE.—The exceedingly rude state of Horticultural science in England at a time when the sister art of domestic Architecture was perhaps more flourishing than at any period of our history, cannot be better illustrated than by the following curious and authentic paper, read in 1794 to the Antiquarian Society, and subsequently printed, one can hardly call it published, in the twelfth volume of the "*Archæologia*," where it has lain most honourably buried amongst "*Essays on the Venta Icenorum*," and "*Letters on the Pusey Horn*," for these thirty years. (N.B. The copy of that venerable quarto in which I discovered it was still uncut.) I insert it here because I think my readers will be as much amused as I have been at the odd notions of gardening entertained by our ancestors, especially by the greenhouses built in the shade, and the rabbit warren in the midst of the flower gardens. What would the Horticultural Society say to such doings?

"A short account of several gardens near London, with remarks on some particulars wherein they excel or are deficient, upon a view of them in December 1691. Communicated to the Society by the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, Vice President, from an original M.S. in his possession.

"1. Hampton Court Garden is a large plot, environed with an iron palisade round about next the Park, laid all in walks, grass-plots and borders. Next to the house, some flat and broad beds, are set with narrow rows of dwarf box, in figures like lace patterns. In one of the lesser gardens is a large green house divided into several rooms, and all of them with stoves under them, and fire to keep a perpetual heat. In these there are no orange, or lemon trees, or myrtles, or any greens, but such tender foreign ones as need continual warmth.

"2. Kensington gardens are not great nor abounding with fine plants. The orange, lemon, myrtles, and what other trees they

had there in summer were all removed to Mr. Loudon's and Mr. Wise's greenhouse at Brompton Park, a little mile from them. But the walks and grass laid very fine, and they were digging up a plot of four or five acres to enlarge their garden.

"3. The Queen Dowager's garden at Hammersmith has a good greenhouse, with a high erected front to the south whence the roof falls backward. The house is well stored with greens of common kinds; but the queen not being for curious plants or flowers, they want of the most curious sorts of greens, and in the garden there is little of value but wall trees; though the gardener there, Monsieur Hermon Van Guine, is a man of great skill and industry, having raised great numbers of orange and lemon trees by inoculation, with myrtles, Roman bayes, and other greens of pretty shapes, which he has to dispose of.

"4. Beddington garden, at present in the hands of the Duke of Norfolk, but belonging to the family of Carew, has in it the best orangery in England. The orange and lemon trees there grow in the ground, and have done so near one hundred years, as the gardener, an aged man, said he believed. There are a great number of them, the house wherein they are being above two hundred feet long; they are most of them thirteen feet high and very full of fruit, the gardener not having taken off so many flowers this last summer as usually others do. He said he gathered off them at least ten thousand oranges this last year. The heir of the family being but about five years of age, the trustees take care of the orangery, and this year they built a new house over them. There are some myrtles growing amongst them, but they look not well for want of trimming. The rest of the garden is all out of order, the orangery being the gardener's chief care; but it is capable of being made one of the best gardens in England, the soil being very agreeable, and a clear silver stream running through it.

" 5. Chelsea Physic Garden has great variety of plants both in and out of greenhouses. Their perennial green hedges and rows of different coloured herbs are very pretty, and so are their banks *set with shades of herbs in the Irish-stitch way*, but many plants of the garden were not in so good order as might be expected, and as would have been answerable to other things in it. After I had been there I heard that Mr. Watts the keeper of it was blamed for his neglect, and that he would be removed.

" 6. My Lord Ranelagh's garden being but lately made, the plants are but small, but the plats, borders and walks, are curiously kept and elegantly designed, having the advantage of opening into Chelsea College walks. The kitchen garden there lies very fine, with walks and seats, one of which being large and covered was then under the hands of a curious painter. The house is very fine within, all the rooms being wainscoted with Norway oak, and all the chimneys adorned with carving, as in the council chamber in Chelsea College.

" 7. Arlington Garden being now in the hands of my Lord of Devonshire is a fair plat, with good walks both airy and shady. *There are six of the greatest earthen pots that are any where else, being at least two feet over within the edge, but they stand abroad, and have nothing in them but the tree holy-oke, an indifferent plant which grows well enough in the ground.* Their greenhouse is very well and their green yard excels ; but their greens were not so bright and clean as farther off in the country, as if they suffered something from the smutty air of the town.

" 8. My Lord Fauconberg's Garden at Sutton Court has several pleasant walks and apartments in it ; but the upper garden next the house is too irregular and the bowling green too little to be commended. The greenhouse is very well made but ill-set. It is divided into three rooms, and very well furnished with good

greens , but it is so placed that the sun shines not on the plants in winter when they most need its beams, the dwelling-house standing betwixt the sun and it. The maze or wilderness there, is very pretty, being set all with greens, with a cypress arbour in the middle supported with a well wrought timber frame ; of late it grows thin at the bottom by their letting the fir trees grow without their reach unclipped. The enclosure, wired in for white pheasants and partridges, is a fine apartment, especially in summer when the bones of Italian bayes are set out, and the timber walk with vines on the side is very fine when the blew pots are on the pedestals on the top of it, and so is the first pond with the greens at the head of it.

“ 9. Sir William Temple being lately gone to live at his house in Farnham, his garden and greenhouse at West Sheen, where he has lived of late years, are not so well kept as they have been ; many of his orange-trees and other greens being given to Sir John Temple his brother at East Sheen, and other gentlemen ; but his greens that are remaining (being as good a stock as most greenhouses have) are very fresh and thriving, the room they stand in suiting well with them, and being well contrived, if it be no defect in it that the floor is a foot at least within the ground, as is also the floor of the dwelling-house. He had attempted to have orange-trees to grow in the ground (as at Beddington), and for that purpose had enclosed a square of ten feet wide, with a low brick wall, and sheltered them with wood, but they would not do. His orange-trees, in summer, stand not in any particular square or enclosure, under some shelter, as most others do, but are disposed on pedestals of Portland stone at equal distance, on a board over against a south wall, where is his best fruit and fairest walk.

“ 10. Sir Henry Capell's Garden at Kew, has as curious greens, and is as well kept as any about London. His two *Lentiscus* trees (for which he paid forty pounds to *Versprit*) are said to be the

best in England not only of their sort but of greens. *He has four white striped hollies, about four feet above their cases, kept round and regular, which cost him five pounds a tree this last year, and six laurustinus he has, with large round equal heads, which are very flowery, and make a fine shew.* His orange trees and other choice greens stand out in summer in two walks, about fourteen feet wide, enclosed with a timber frame about seven feet high, and set with silver firs hedge-wise, which are as high as the frame, and this to secure them from wind and tempest, and sometimes from the scorching sun. His terrace-walk, bare in the middle, and grass on either side, with a hedge of rue on one side next a low wall, and a row of dwarf trees on the other, shews very fine, and so do from thence his yew-hedges with trees of the same, at equal distance, kept in pretty shapes with tonsure. His flowers and fruits are of the best, for the advantage of which two parallel walls, about fourteen feet high, were now raised and almost finished. If the ground were not a little irregular, it would excel in other points as well as in furniture.

“ 11. Sir Stephen Fox's garden at Chiswick, being but of five years' standing, is brought to great perfection for the time. It excels for a fair gravel-walk betwixt two yew hedges with rounds and spines of the same, all under smooth tonsure. At the far end of this garden, are two myrtle hedges that cross the garden; they are about three feet high, and covered in winter with painted board cases. The other gardens are full of flowers and salleting, and the walls well clad. The greenhouse is well built, well set, and well furnished.

“ 12. Sir Thomas Cook's garden at Hackney is very large, and not so fine at present, because of his intending to be at three thousand pounds charge with it this next summer, as his gardener said. There are two greenhouses in it, but the greens are not

extraordinary, for one of the roofs being made a receptacle for water, overcharged with weight, fell down last year upon the greens, and made a great destruction among the trees and pots. In one part of it is a warren containing about two acres, very full of coney, though there was but a couple put in a few years since. There is a pond or a mote round about them, and on the outside of that a brick wall four feet high, both which I think will not keep them within their compass. There is a large fish-pond lying on the South to a brick wall, which is finely clad with philarea. Water brought from far in pipes furnishes his several ponds as they want it.

" 13. Sir Josiah Childs's plantations of walnut and other trees, at Wanstead, are much more worth seeing than his gardens, which are but indifferent. Besides the great number of fruit trees, he has planted his enclosures with great regularity, he has vast number of elms, ashes, limes, &c., planted in rows on Epping Forest. Before his outgate, which is above twelve-score distance from his house, are two large fish ponds on the forest in the way from his house, with trees on either side lying betwixt them; in the middle of either pond is an island betwixt twenty and thirty yards over, and in the middle of each a house, *the one like the other*. They are said to be well stocked with fish, and so they had need to be if they cost him five thousand pounds as it is said they did; as also that his plantations cost twice as much.

" 14. Sir Robert Clayton has great plantations at Marden in Surrey, in a soil not very benign to plants, but with great charge he forces nature to obey him. His gardens are big enough, but strangely irregular, his chief walk not being level, but rising in the middle and falling much more at one end than the other; neither is the wall carried by a line either on the top or sides, but runs like an ordinary park wall, built as the ground goes. He built a good greenhouse but set it so that the hills in winter keep

the sun from it, so that they place their greens in a house on higher ground, not built for that purpose. His dwelling house stands very low, surrounded with great hills; and yet they have no water but what is forced from a deep well into a waterhouse, where they are furnished by pipes at pleasure.

“ 15. The Archbishop of Canterbury's garden at Lambeth, ~~has~~ little in it but walks, the late Archbishop not delighting in one, but they are now making them better, and they have already a greenhouse, one of the finest and costliest about the town. It is of three rooms, the middle having a stove under it; the foresides of the rooms are almost all glass, the roof covered with lead, the whole part (to adorn the building) rising gavel-wise higher than the rest; *but it is placed so near Lambeth Church that the sun shines most on it in winter after eleven o'clock*; a fault owned by the gardener but not thought on by the contrivers. Most of the greens are oranges and lemons which have very large ripe fruit on them.

“ 16. Dr. Uvedale, of Enfield, is a great lover of plants, and having an extraordinary art in managing them, is become master of the greatest and choicest collection of exotic greens that is perhaps, any where in this land. His greens take up six or seven houses or roomsteads. His orange trees and largest myrtles fill up his biggest house, and another house is filled with myrtles of a less size, and these more nice and curious plants that need closer keeping are in warmer rooms, and some of them stoved when he thinks fit. His flowers are choice, his stock numerous, and his culture of them very methodical and curious; but to speak of the garden, in the whole it does not lie fine, to please the eye, his delight and care lying more in the ordering particular plants, than in the pleasing view and form of his garden.

“ 17. Dr. Tillotson's garden near Enfield, is a pleasurable

place for walks, and some good walls there are too; but the tall aspen trees, and the many ponds in the heart of it are not so agreeable. He has two houses for greens, but had few in them, all the best being removed to Lambeth. The house is moated about.

“ 18. Mr. Evelyn has a pleasant villa at Deptford, a fine garden for walks and hedges (especially his holly, one which he writes of in his *Sylva*), and a pretty little greenhouse with an indifferent stock in it. In his garden he has four large round Philaneas smooth-clipt, raised on a single stalk from the ground, a fashion now much used. Part of his garden is very woody and shaded for walking, but his garden, not being walled, has little of the best fruits.

“ 19. Mr. Watts's house and garden made near Enfield are new; but the garden, for the time, is very fine, and large and regularly laid out, with a fair fish-pond in the middle. He built ^a green house this summer, with three rooms, (somewhat like the Archbishop of Canterbury's) the middle with a stove under it, and a sky light above, and both of them of glass on the fore-side, with shutters within, and the roof finely covered with Irish slate. But this fine house is under the same fault with three before, (numbers 8, 14, 15.): *they built it in summer and thought not of winter; the dwelling house on the south side interposing betwixt the sun and it, now when its beams should refresh plants.*

“ 20. Brompton Park garden, belonging to Mr. London and Mr. Wise, has a large long greenhouse, the front all glass and board, the North side brick. Here the king's greens, which were in summer at Kensington, are placed, but they take but little room in comparison of their own. Their garden is chiefly a nursery for all sorts of plants, of which they are very full.

“ 21. Mr. Rayntan's garden at Endfield, is observable for no-

thing but his greenhouse, which he has had for many years. His orange, lemon, and myrtle trees, are as full and furnished as any in cases. He has a myrtle *cut in shape of a chaine*, that is at least six feet high from the case, but the lower part is thin of leaves. The rest of the garden is very ordinary, and on the outside of his garden he has a warren which makes the ground about his seat lye rudely, and sometimes the coneys work under the wall into the garden.

" 22. Mr. Richardson at East Barnet has a pretty garden with fine walks and good flowers; but the garden not being walled about, they have less summer fruit, yet are therefore, the more industrious in managing the peach and apricot dwarf standards, which, they say, supply them plentifully with very good fruit. There is a good fish pond in the middle of it, from which a broad gravel walk leads to the highway, where a fair pair of broad gates, with a narrower on either side, open at the top to look through small bars, well wrought and well painted, are a great ornament to the garden. They have orange and lemon trees, but the wife and son being the managers of the garden (the husband being gouty and not minding it) *they cannot prevail for a house for them other than a barn end.*

" 23. Captain Foster's garden at Lambeth has many curiosities in it. His greenhouse is full of fresh and flourishing plants, and before it is the finest striped holly hedge that perhaps is in England. He has many myrtles, not the greatest, but of the most fanciful shapes that are any where else. He has a frame walk of timber covered with vines, which with others running on most of his walls without prejudice to his lower trees, yield him a deal of wine. Of flowers he has a good choice, and his Virginia and other birds in a great variety, with his glass hive, add much to the pleasure of his garden.

" 24. Monsieur Anthony Versprit has a little garden of very choice things. His greenhouse has no great variety of plants, but what he has are of the best sort and very well ordered. His oranges and lemons (fruit and tree) are extraordinary fair, and for lentiscuses and Roman bayes he has choice above others.

" 25. Ricketts at Hoxton, has a large ground, and abundantly stocked with all manner of flowers, fruit trees and other garden plants, with lime trees which are now much planted; and for a sale garden, he has a very good greenhouse and well filled with fresh greens, besides which he has another room filled with greens in pots. He has a greater stock of Assyrian thyme than any body else, for besides many pots of it, he has beds abroad with plenty of roots which they cover with mats and straw in winter. He sells his things with the dearest, and not taking due care to have his plants prove well, he is supposed to have lost much custom.

" 26. Pearson has not near so large a ground as Ricketts (on whom he almost joins), and therefore has not so many trees, but of flowers he has great choice, and of anemones he avers that he has the best about London, and sells them only to gentlemen. He has no greenhouse, yet has abundance of myrtles and striped philaneas with oranges and other greens, which he keeps safe enough under sheds, sunk a foot within ground, and covered with straw. He has abundance of cypresses, which at three feet high, he sells for fourpence a piece to those who take any number. He is moderate in his prices, and accounted very honest in his dealings, which gets him much chapmanry.

" 27. Darby at Hoxton has but a little garden, but is master of several curious greens, that other sale gardeners want, and which he saves from cold and winter weather, in greenhouses of his own making. His fritalaria crassa (a green) had a flower on it, of

the breadth of a half crown, like an embroidered star of several colours; I saw not the like any where, no, not at Dr. Uvedale's, though he has the same plant. He raises many striped Hollies by inoculation, though Captain Foster grafts them, as we do apple trees. He is very curious in propagating greens, but is dear with them. He has a folio paper book in which he has pasted the leaves and flowers of almost all manner of plants, which make a pretty shew, and are more instructive than any cuts in herbals.

"28. Clements at Mile-End has no bigger a garden than Darby, but has more greens, yet not of such curious sorts. He keeps them in a green house made with a light charge. He has vines in many places, round old trees, which they wind about. He made wine this year of his white muscadine and white frontinac better I thought than any French white wine. He keeps a shop of seeds, and plants in pots next the street.

Jan. 26. 1691.

J. GIBSON."

Archæologia, vol. xii. page 181.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
St. John's Square, London.

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